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A CASE OF SARDINES



5

CHARLES POOLE CLEAVES

Stanford University Memorial Fund



In tribute to

Barbara Jane Kegel

from a gift by
Mrs. Vincent Y. Bowditch

Bowditch Smith

Miss Mary E. Shull
Xmas, 1912.
From G.L.S.



A Case of Sardines

A Story of the Maine Coast

By
Charles Poole Cleaves

"Human life is packed here, rugged as the coast
and throbbing like the sea. And what do we eat?
Only a case of sardines!"

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To
JAMES CHURCH GANNETT, M. D.,

*Who by his rare ministrations in the days when we
heard his voice and saw his form wrought out in our
remembrance a threefold biography :*

PHYSICIAN: CHRISTIAN: FRIEND.

*"Thy presence sweet
Still through long years of vigil I may share ;
For if from that enchanted spirit-land
Some vision of thine after-thought may shine,*

*To cheer my life and make it more like thine,
Then though thy place on earth a void must be,
Beloved friend, thou art not dead to me."*

Preface

WHEN I proposed that the romance of Marshall Dee be told and the scenes of the sardine industry unveiled in the story of Echo Bluffs, one asked :—

“Do you think it will mean as much to you when those who do n’t understand, or appreciate, or need it, say what they please about it?”

To which there could be but one answer; and if it finds and fulfils its place and purpose it may mean more.

Repeated in memory and conversations its impressions have deepened in the mind of the writer for whom the scenes have an abiding charm, and who holds in genial thought and warm regard the people of “Down East.” Gratitude also insists that the influence of these scenes and lives be sent out into the world.

Let the uneven line between fact and fiction lie undiscovered. Not even the writer can trace its dim path. What matter whether human experiences and the facts and conditions of life be reproduced in history, in philosophy, or in fiction, so life meets life and the impulse to a better life be given?

It may find those who need a mission to set them right with humanity and with God. It may find lives enmeshed in the commonplace snarls of working and living, in the rattle and jar of grim machinery, and set them to weaving the threads of life into a pattern that will please themselves and God. It may find hungry, dissatisfied lives and turn them to solving the mysteries of friendship and love more bravely, unselfishly, successfully. It may lighten and brighten with the humor and music of labor. It may enter the homes and hearts of those who are a part of its pages and tell them that the lights and shadows of their lives are watched by those who understand and sympathize; that the garments of labor are robes of nobility if they clothe a clean body and a clean heart; and that life is worth living if the soul lives well.

CHARLES POOLE CLEAVES.

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A CASE OF SARDINES

"It is true that love cannot be forced, that it cannot be made to order, that we cannot love because we ought or even because we want. But we can bring ourselves into the presence of the lovable. We can enter into Friendship through the door of Discipleship. We can learn Love through Service."

HUGH BLACK.

CHAPTER I

A TIDE AT A TURN

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea we are now afloat."

—*Shakespeare.*

WE sat in the consulting-room of the hospital annex. The mid-June air, growing sultry, foretold the summer. My city-pent associates uttered notes of envy when, in a mood below the level of my not infrequent doldrums, I detailed my plans ; and Emerson, the voluble member of the consulting staff, offered in hyperpathetic tones to share the pain and the penalty with me. But I, wedded to the routine of my life and inflated with the rapid success of early medical practice, had found neither pleasure nor humor in my colleague's imperative advice. Maine may serve the millionaire, and lovers of pleasure may seek summers of idleness, but a young man's heedless ambition asks no better grant than a long lever

and time to toil. However, Dr. Stahl knew best, and I myself had blanched when he told me, on the previous week, the prospective consequences of a further neglect of nature's alarum. He had closed his generous and solicitous urging with a cool, decisive snap:—

“Take your choice, Dee. If you do n't care to go to Maine this summer, make your last will and testament at leisure. Difficult business,” he muttered, eying me reflectively, “to find a new partner in the midst of next winter's epidemics.”

I packed up with a heavy heart, and was in sheer desperation when we swung off into East River; but two lines of coast travel stirred new thoughts and new appetites,—stomachic and mental. While we marched on the sea, through meteors of spray, I found myself picturing a new life,—the old passing into oblivion. The pulse-beat of the steamer's heart spurred on the life-blood in mine.

With an unexpected laugh I turned from my berth on Wednesday morning, and, out on deck, watched the red light of dawn breaking on the coast as the lighthouses fell asleep. The stalwart headlands, the rugged cliffs, the church spire, the

town, and the sea-stained wharves of Echo Bluffs, nested against the mountains, came into view. With a sense of the luxury of a child lying in maternal arms at its natural feast I lay along the quarter-seat drawing in the briny odor that swept with the light wind from the wharves and the red rocks and beaches.

We swung to the dock. The long line of sardine factories crowned the spider-limbed wharves, their cutting-sheds open to view. The fish-boats had come in early, and their shining, slimy cargoes of young herring were fast losing their heads under the long knives of boys and girls, bare-armed, barefooted, and more or less bare-limbed—brown as the shore that stretched eastward; some in their common garb, rolled and abbreviated, some with aprons of oilcloth or sacking; some draped in grain-sacks inverted, with arms and head thrust through slits in the bottom. I admire the picturesqueness of our street gamin, and of the East Side maiden Hebrew, where charity has not touched them. Here was the same graphic touch of nature's art, but with the bloom of summer and the robustness of open air and sea.

Two young cutters, Syrian girls, I judged, who

had seen not more than seven years upon this planet, had slipped out from their work to eye the steamer and passengers and climb the hawser posts. Their machetes, nearly as long as their bare forearms, gleamed and dangled. Their faces glowed with the careless, unconscious joy of childhood; their wrists were stained with the blood of decapitated herring; their eyes were as innocent as the light of the stars that look down on the sufferings and sins of humanity, and know nothing about them.

I turned to study the crowd at the landing. Something familiar in a square shoulder called me to a more precise inspection of a face, that finally turned toward the steamer, glanced at me, and lighted with a flash of surprise.

“Hello!”

“Hello!” I replied.

But it took a spasm of our minds to dislodge each other's names, and then I hastened down the gangplank to pass an eager hand to Paul Shepard, whom I remembered as an undergraduate, and of whom I had heard nothing since I left him in college.

“Well, Paul Shepard!”

“Marshall Dee!”

"What in curiosity's name are you doing down here?" I asked.

"Answer the same for my benefit!" he laughed.

"Are you to stay?"

I affirmed.

"Have you quarters?"

"Yes," I replied; "engaged—at the Huff House. Where is it?"

"Inquire, please," he replied. "Can't you ask also for my house, and call to-night? I have an evening at home, but not a minute now."

I nodded, and he wrung my hand and was off. Inquiring my way to the Huff House I fell to cogitating as to what Shepard's business might be. I culled old memories for any premises, but was baffled. "Very well," said I, "he knows the world—and people. I can tell by his grip. He must be a drummer on a furlough or a parson in his pound." So I gave up the guess with a chuckle at my own wit to soothe my failure.

But that evening, as we sat on his scythe-clipped lawn, where I found him, Mrs. Shepard and the little flock, I turned the full blaze of my curiosity upon him.

"Well, Paul—a drummer, eh? You look it but you live too far East, and"—

He laughed. "I travel," he said.

"I thought so," I replied complacently.
"What goods?"

His eyes twinkled. "The factory's just inside," he answered.

The full truth of the matter dawned upon me when he led the way to a room where the backs of books, the contents of a few frames on the walls, a table of periodicals, and the general atmosphere revealed a clergyman's study. I stared at him until he laughed.

"You, Paul, a preacher!" I exclaimed. "You have my hearty sympathy!"

He frowned,—then startled his books with a laugh that might have come direct from a college room with all the vigor of ten years before.

"Marshall," said he, "do you remember Eve's sandwiches?" Eve, respectfully so called, was the matron of our boarding-club at college. I remembered her—and the sandwiches. "You know her original scheme. If the bread was stale or heavy, good meat made a sandwich. If the meat was poor, good bread made a sandwich. That's the ministry! And you know we all liked Eve's sandwiches!"

"Not I!" I protested.

"Well, Marshall,—or doctor! I know your story. You've started to save the race and convert the rest of the medical profession to your own persuasion. But what is that item that told me Monday of this down-east trip? Tough luck in your sandwich, I judge."

"Paul," said I, "I'm discouraged,—or was until this morning, and may be again to-morrow. You don't care for particulars? No. I'm out of the city for three months this year, and if Doctor Stahl, my colleague, is right, for two months each year of my natural life. It takes a United States constitution backed up by a Monroe doctrine to hold ground, physically, in the city in summer—at such work as mine. I'm all right except for family inheritance. As for that, I've no doubt Doctor Stahl is right. 'Leave your work and the city two months of every year,' he said, 'and you'll be a Methuselah.'"

Shepard fastened his kindly gray eyes upon me in serious scrutiny, and then, with rare tact, called my attention to the peculiar glory of the Echo Bluffs sunset. In the west the great Artist had made his bold, broad sweeps of color, and the rich glow above brought a sense of ineffable beauty. The reflected brightness was

thrown across the sky and beyond the harbor, dividing island from island and tree from tree. The broad windows of the St. James on the island beyond had become a sea of glass and fire, and the loneliest fish-house on the shore was surmounted with a halo. Over all the east and north and south were wrought shifting scenes that stirred one's memories and impulses like rapid, passionate music.

Then, as we turned again to the western window, we saw between scattered trees, in the passing brightness, a quiet green sky, as calm as a quiet green sea,—a rare, pale, delicate green, that brought a sense of infinite peace.

"Marshall," said Shepard, "come down to the old factory just above Salter's Beach to-morrow,—inquire for the 'Gospel Harbor' if you like,—about half-past nine. You're not in New York now. This is another world. If you live in it a summer you'll be a different creature. Besides, you may learn—— Pshaw! you're here for a good time. You'll find it! Come out now and hear my wife's music, and then I agree an early night will do you good."

CHAPTER II

A MOONLIGHT DRAMA

"A million sermons would not reach the people who have been influenced by 'The Lost Chord' or 'The Better Land.'"

"Only by repeatedly awakening the appropriate emotions can character be formed."—*Herbert Spencer*.

I WOULD scarcely have classed Shepard among the clergy as I found him in the old factory next morning, with his shirt-sleeves rolled, his bare, boyish hair tumbled, and a tenpin ball poised above his shoulder. A swing and a spin, and as the ball leaped away he turned and extended his hand. "We built it ourselves," he replied to my query about the bowling-alley. "Some of the boys found the nickel-in-the-slot didn't pay dividends. The corporation offered us the use of this old factory for anything that would benefit the sardiners. The boys chipped in to buy this outfit, and we ran this partition and built the alley. It's a trifle winding, because a high tide started a corner post of the building; but it serves well enough. The boys play free, the men pay, and the proceeds above repairs go

into literature and games, which we keep distributed in the homes and camps. Of course the money return is not large. We don't care to take much. It's a soul-saving scheme. The sardiners call this the 'Gospel Harbor.'"

"Minister,"—a slim figure at the door with a huge, gleaming knife in her tiny hand startled me,—“the cutters want to know if there's going to be a meeting to-night.”

“Tell them yes,—and they're all to come.”

The apparition vanished.

“Come in to-night, Marshall,” he continued. “Look!” He flung open a door into the main apartment where the rude benches straggled grotesquely across the floor. “Our church is too far up town, and—thanks to the corporation which furnishes the building and the consent of the church which lets me do as I like—the gospel goes where it finds a mission.”

At ten o'clock it was a hot forenoon,—exceptionally hot for the down-east shore,—and I was down on the beach near by, curled under the grateful shade of a boulder, trying to maintain a drowsy interest in Stahl's recent “Future of Therapeutics.” I breathed the cool odor of the sea, which often floats ashore in days of severe

heat, so far at least as the banks above the beaches. I nodded, fatigued with reaction of change and idleness.

"Make it three, Tuffy!" a voice yelled not ten yards away.

I leaped with the shock of disturbed bliss and caught a glimpse of a lank figure turning and climbing the bank. A boat was disappearing under the stern of a schooner offshore, and a faint "Three, sir," floated back.

Trifling mysteries often awake curiosity, and I amused my dozing hour by fanciful and unsatisfactory explanations. At noon I aroused and tramped back to the hotel. At two o'clock Shepard appeared and begged me (I was glad) to visit one of the shops. The afternoon was hot, even on Water Street. A faint breath from the sea climbed the wharves, borrowing their odor.

You never saw sardines canned? Nor I before,—often since. A town school turned loose in a cutting-shed was decapitating the last of fifty hogsheads of young herring, and these, tanked and washed, were disappearing in baskets by rope and hook through a hole in the next floor to the room above. Up-stairs, "flaked" and "dried," immersed in boiling oil and "fried," then

drained, the "carriers" hurried them to the rows of tables where groups of "packers" tucked them into their tin cradles with nimble fingers. The packers were a motley group. There were brown-tressed Evangelines, New England Priscillas, gay Delilahs, pale, gaunt mothers with tired faces, younger women with jaunty and resolute air. Bright beauty, flabby stolidity, wholesome character and shabby tinsel,—all were there. An occasional ripple of song lightened the smoky and oil-laden atmosphere, but the monotonous call of the packers,—“Fish, George,” “Fish, Ben,”—had the dry sound of a hot day. Out in the sealing-room the gas-stoves fumed, the coppers hissed, and the “sealers’” heads bobbed about in torrid zones and volcanic odors. The minister had been chatting with a weary-eyed woman whose face, I had noticed, brightened on his approach. He came out where I stood by the sealers, made some explanations and introduced some of the men, showed me the bathroom processes, and when we had seen it all and I had a dawning sense of the variety of life and industry we passed out.

“Human souls there, Dee,” said he, “all sorts and conditions. I like to work among them.”

We walked to the opposite side of the wharf, where the cases of sardines were stacked in waiting for the steamers.

"This is the outcome of it all," said Shepard reflectively. "It's a product of something more than mechanical processes, too. Like all results of labor, it's a product of processes of human life. Literature dignifies the plough, the anvil and the loom. The sweat-shop gets a bit of honor, born of pity and pathos, and the man with a hoe is made famous by the painter and the man with a pen. I tell you," he burst forth, laying his hand on one of the boxes with impulsive affection, "there's not a product of human industry but speaks of hearts as well as of fingers! Do you remember what the Scotch fish-wife said to her customer? 'It's not fish you're buying, mon, but men's lives.' Human life is packed here, rugged as the coast and throbbing like the sea. And what do we call it? Only a case of sardines!"

"Shepard," said I, with sudden recollection of my disturbed morning nap, "what might 'Make it three, Tuffy,' mean?"

He caught my shoulder and turned upon me with a pair of blazing eyes and a hot face. I

stared dumbly. Fully a minute later his face was cooling, but his tongue spoke hotly.

"Where did you hear that? 'What does it mean?' It's the curse of this town. It means more grief for Ben Perley's wife. It means another slide for George Salter; one less chance to save Joe Henley's soul, and Guy Wilson trapped again. It is lost hope to Egerton's girl, —dollars spent and boys tempted, and the beginning of shame to girls. Oh, you do n't understand all this! It means hell breaks out in the 'Acre' again!"

"What has happened?" I asked him.

"I do n't know, I do n't know." His face was wrought with a great grief.

A boy with a bicycle appeared, to my annoyance. "Hampton wants to see you, Mr. Shepard. Take my wheel."

With a hasty explanation Paul was off and the boy disappeared into the factory. I sought the shade of the shore again with another mystery coddled in my brain.

I suppose the travel and the new experiences of the week, with relaxation from all sense of duty's demands, flung a mantle of drowsiness about me. And there was a balm in the soft,

dainty breeze stealing from the south that was mesmeric.

When I awoke it was night. The round moon was rising over a distant island point far across the bay, and the bulwark of land and black masses of spruce and fir stood in shaggy contrast to the smooth, quiet sky and lighted sea. A lone lobster-buoy flashed in the wake of the moon. The lights of the town behind me rose in terraces where street by street they mounted the hill. Not far away I heard the "wump, wump," of oars in thole-pins, and saw a yawl-boat steal out from the shadow of a cove close by and head towards the lone schooner.

Stupefied by long sleep, I tried to guess my whither and where. To add to the bewilderment a song that seemed a part of the moonlight, it was so strong and beautiful, came drifting down from the shore above.

"I love to tell the story,
More wonderful it seems,
Than all the golden fancies
Of all our golden dreams.
I love to tell the story,
It did so much for me,
And that is just the reason
I tell it now to thee."

Ten minutes later with cleared senses I had picked my way over the stones on the beach, climbed the bank by the wharf, and was standing at the ragged edge of the crowd at the entrance of the "Gospel Harbor." It was a full house. Evidently the meeting was at the center of its time and at the height of interest. There were the shining faces of those who laid bare their own experiences—the absorbed interest of the many who drank in the words and breathed the atmosphere. Shepard stood on a platform at the front, and by word or look linked testimonies together, a continuous chain. At intervals the singer lifted the listeners farther and farther from straggling thoughts of the day's toil and the quest for sensuous pleasure toward the high plane where life becomes a marching-ground and a battle-field.

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
Ye soldiers of the cross,
Lift high his royal banner,
It must not suffer loss.
From victory unto victory
His army shall he lead,
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed."

"Who sings?" I asked, at my elbow.

"Nan Rhodes."

“Stand up, stand up for Jesus,
The trumpet call obey;
Forth to the mighty conflict
In this, his glorious day.
Ye that are men now serve him
Against unnumbered foes;
Your courage rise with danger,
And strength to strength oppose.”

Edging by my side I saw the disturber of my morning nap. He ran a restless eye over the audience, I thought at the time—oddly enough—like a quack seeking gullible patients. In the midst of the song he slipped out of the door.

There was a hush in the audience. Shepard was praying. It was a prayer that moved me as I was not accustomed to be moved. There was a touch of the grief that was flung into his voice in the afternoon's outcry, with an appeal that took fast hold on something that sent new throbs of life into his soul, and changed his tone into one of triumphant expectation. Yet, as I have racked my thought, but one expression has come back to me,—and that was fixed by the spell of the moonlight that fell about the doorway and mocked the straggling lamps within, and the atmosphere, still vibrant with the music,—“O God, help the power of song to-night!”

The singer stepped forward again :

"Sowing the seed by the daylight fair,
Sowing the seed by the noonday glare,
Sowing the seed by the fading light,
Sowing the seed in the solemn night.
Oh, what shall the harvest be ?
Oh, what shall the harvest be ?
Sown in the darkness or sown in the light,
Sown in our weakness or sown in our might,
Gathered in time or eternity,
Sure, ah sure, will the harvest be!"

I remembered the opposite entrance and the door through the partition that shut off the bowling-alley. "I'll get in at the front," I thought, with an irresistible desire to see the scene face to face. Out of the crowd and away from the door I hurried around by the wharf. The door was locked—I might have known it would be. With a sudden pang and a thought of the night's dew I remembered, as I faced the shore, my book, left at the scene of my afternoon's nap. With all my interest in the events at the old factory I slipped hastily over the bank close by the Cove.

Two figures stood on the beach, the moonlight full upon them, so wrapped in their conversation that they paid no attention to the rustle of bushes as I sprawled almost before their sight. One, I knew by the form, was the author of that

mystery that had broken my forenoon's dozing, and turned Shepard's face white with rage and grief; the other was a more slender, boyish figure. I'm not an eavesdropper, but the threatening gesture of the man led me to sink into the shadow and listen.

"Guy, what's the use of being a fool? We've as much right to make money as anybody, and somebody's going in to make money on the Fourth. I'll have my share, and I'll give somebody else a chance. If you don't want it, so much the worse for you."

"So much the better, I say!"

"Well, I can't see how. You know it's likely to be a short season after this run o' fish is over. What'll you do then? Your mother's sick, you say. You can't feed the family. If I had young brothers to put through school, as you claim, I'd be smart enough to make money any way I could. I know how it'll come out. You'll let your mother die, and you'll let your brothers shift for themselves, all on account of your pesky notion that you're too good to sell drinks. Why didn't you stay in Camden instead of sneaking over here? We don't need your kind!"

There was a slight quiver of the younger

figure, and I saw his fists clench. He turned and walked to the water's edge. In the silence the clear music of the singer's voice floated down from the scene above :

“Sowing the seed of a lingering pain,
Sowing the seed of a maddened brain,
Sowing the seed of a tarnished name,
Sowing the seed of eternal shame.
Oh, what shall the harvest be ?
Oh, what shall the harvest be ?”

The young man strode back and spoke up with resolute calmness.

“Jerry, there's no use in getting mad. If I was as good as I ought to be, I would n't be here to-night. I'll talk no more about it. If I need money, so does the crowd. Every mother's son of them, and every man with a family, knows as much as I know what it is to want money. I'd be a devil if I helped clean 'em out.”

“Clean 'em out ! Who asked you to clean 'em out ? They'll clean themselves out. They can't keep money. There ain't one of 'em but what aches to spend it before he earns it. Somebody'll have it. Three-year-old boy with a cent, stick of candy ; six-year-old boy with a nickel, a soft beer ; young fellow with a girl, a ride on the

merry-go-round and a drink on the sly; man with a family,—well, he can't keep money 'cause he never learned how. You and I know how! When they scatter money we'd better have our hats out. They clean themselves out, I say. We do n't do it. We catch the scatterings!"

He laughed in coarse triumph. The young man retorted:

"That ain't altogether true, Jerry Phail. It ain't true the boys can't keep money. Of course they'll spend some of it for fun. Any boy'll burn powder on the Fourth. That's none of our business. But they could keep money enough if there wa'n't so many schemes to snatch it away. But suppose they can't keep money; why do n't you take it all? I do n't want it."

"I can't, man, I can't," Phail whispered hoarsely; "there's too many eyes on me. I'm not afraid of the law. There ain't a man in town dares complain, except the minister,—and he can't prove anything. But do you think I'm a fool? You're a stranger in town, mostly, and it do n't matter if you're caught. Nobody'll harm ye. You've no business to lose. There's seventy-five cents profit on every quart of this stuff, the way we sell it. You can have

fifty. That's eighteen dollars for your day's work!"

"And sell my soul and forty others for eighteen dollars!"

"Your soul? How long since you had a soul? Last summer you hooted around here with the rest of the crowd, and was as drunk as the devil when you struck town this spring!"

The young man's head fell and his shoulders drooped. They stood in silence, and in the moment's quiet the voice of some one loud in prayer could be heard from the windows of the old factory, and after a lull the voice of the preacher. Then both turned and listened, checked by something magical in the song that swept down from the ragged building,—from the lips of the singer, unconscious of the mission of her song.

"Where is my wandering boy to-night,
The boy of my tenderest care,
The boy that was once my joy and light,
The child of my love and care?
Oh, where is my boy to-night?
Oh, where is my boy to-night?
My heart o'erflows, for I love him, he knows,
Oh, where is my boy to-night?"

Guy straightened his head suddenly. In the moonlight he seemed to loom above the other.

"Jerry Phail, if you're bound to do it we'll talk it out. You know all that's bad in me. That's easy. You know who is to blame for some of it, too. But there are some things you don't know. I stayed in Camden all winter, at home, and for the sake of my mother's pride I kept sober. She never saw me drunk. I can say that. When I found there was something left in me I made up my mind to be a man. I thought I was all right. Then I started for here in May, and the first man I met on the boat was in the same rotten business you want me to take,—only his was more decent stuff! Of course I got drunk! Do you think I'm made of steel wire? The man don't live who loves whiskey better than I do. What can a man do when he wants it and everybody wants him to have it?"

Phail drew a bottle from his pocket. He uncorked it and held it out, temptingly.

"Do you see that?"

The young man shuddered. I saw his face knotting, his hands clenching and unclenching. The music was still falling about us.

"Oh, could I see you now, my boy,
As fair as in olden time,
When prattle and smile made home a joy,
And life was a merry chime!

Oh, where is my boy to-night?
Oh, where is my boy to-night?
My heart o'erflows, for I love him, he knows,
Oh, where is my boy to-night?"

"Yes, I see it. What's worse—O God!—I smell it. But I tell you, Jerry, I'm out o' your reach to-night. Come an inch nearer and I'll make you sorry. You may stand and hold that bottle all night if you like; I do n't care. I was the devil's own fool last summer, and this spring, too, I found. I do n't wonder you asked how long I've had a soul. I found it out two weeks ago, if you want to know. I'm God's man now, Jerry Phail, I'm God's"—his voice choked. "If I can't do it for my mother and my brothers, I guess for God's sake I can forget I love whiskey,—I hate it so. I can count here as well as you. You can make fools of the boys if you like till you lose the job. There's good stuff in 'em, and maybe somebody else will help make it into men."

He turned and walked away so quickly that the pebbles grated harshly under his tread. Jerry Phail shook his fist at the retreating figure and turned up the Cove. I dropped back from my elbow, wet with the perspiration of excite-



HE HELD OUT THE BOTTLE, TEMPTINGLY.

ment and interest. The words rang in my ears :—

“For God’s sake *I* can forget I love whiskey—
I hate it so !”

CHAPTER III

GUY WILSON—NAN RHODES

—"Men at her side
Grew nobler, girls purer."

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

I SAID nothing to Shepard about the scene on the beach. It was not in my nature to exert myself to listen to tales of woe. Besides, I had a desire to see what might unfold without interference. In the moral warfare I was long accustomed to sitting an idle spectator. But one morning of the following week, as I was book-browsing in his study, Shepard suddenly pushed aside his work, dropped his pen, and turning his chair toward me began to talk. He was graphic in description and recital.

"About that young man whom we saw sealing at the 'Resurrection,' by the first table. I saw you studying him the day we were there. He came from Camden last summer. There was pretty good material in him, as you probably think. How much he drank before he came here I don't know. He probably took his start

some time ago, but he had n't been here long before he was going down hill so fast I could see him slide. Then he would halt, and turn, and try to climb the hill. His boarding-mistress took interest in him. She talked to him like a mother. It annoyed him at first. She told me about it in this way :—

““Mrs. Cook,” he said to me, “I do n't want to be lectured,—you'd better let me alone.” Then he began to take it kindly, and when he'd come home from work he'd dance up to the sink and say, “I'm all right to-night, Mrs. Cook.” And it prided him that I'd taken a notion to him. Then he would have days when he would look so black that I dare n't say a word. I knew the trouble and I'd say to the carpenter, “O Mr. Todd, look out for Guy to-day !”

““One night when we had finished supper he jumped up so quick that we all guessed what had come over him. We looked at each other. Then one of the girls spoke up and said, “Go down to the post-office with us, Guy.” “Can't to-night, girls,—can't wait.” But they snatched his hat and got him laughing, and slipped on their jackets and hurried off together. And the girls brought him back, too, and kept him at his

guitar all the evening. They told me next day that when they passed some of the boys going to the wharf Guy spoke up suddenly and said, "There, girls, see what you've saved me from."

"That was Mrs. Cook's story.

"Then sometimes when snares were thick, or nights when the boats came over the bay with liquor from Highton, Guy would slip, and slip to the bottom. But one thing seemed to count with him; or, rather—one young woman. That was Nan Rhodes."

He leaned back with a painfully absent air.

"Nan Rhodes?"

"Yes," still absently.

"Well, where are you, man?" I said impatiently. "Come back and tell me who Nan Rhodes is."

"That's the trouble. I can't. When I think about it I always collapse into a state of fancying. Oh, of course, I can tell you this: she's Anna Rhodes, a gray-eyed 'blue-nose' from Nova Scotia, who packs fish in the 'Resurrection.' But that's all I know of her biography—I think no one here knows much more. Evidently she has lived in the States; she brought her church letter from St. Botolph's. But she

came here from some little town up in Annapolis Valley, in Nova Scotia, and took a tenement for housekeeping in a small cottage near the 'Acre.' It belongs to the corporation that owns most of the factories. What she is passes my understanding—and stirs my inquisitiveness."

"Well, what has she to do with Guy Wilson?"

"Perhaps not much personally—perhaps a great deal. I don't know. Once last year Guy nearly walked into a trap, eyes wide open. Some imps were lying in wait for him one Sunday night to tell him that Bob Derrah, who is night-watch at the 'Scrimmage,' was sick and no one but Guy could take his place. You can guess what kind of a scheme they may have laid to trap the poor fellow. Nan Rhodes heard a whisper of it. Before he reached the church door, coming out from the meeting, she stepped up to him—he came the week before, and she had never spoken to him previously, I suppose—and said:—

"'Guy, I've broken a guitar-string. Can't you let me have one? Can I get it to-night?'

"'Why, yes,—certainly,' he stammered.

"'Come on, girls, let's hurry.' And she swept him off with a half-dozen girls, and it was not

till a week later that some one told him a part of the story, and he guessed the rest.

“After that he noticed that she watched him. The fact is she watches everybody, but not obtrusively. We know it, that’s all. But, as Nat Murray says, she never takes down the bars. Guy carried fish that summer. When he had the blues she threw one of her irresistible jokes at him as he dumped fish on her table. When he was drinking, if he had sense enough to work, he could see that she pretended at first not to see him; if he kept at it she would look at him some day with a mute ‘Where’s your manhood?’ air that would almost sober him. So it went, off and on, through the fall. You may think there was little influence in that—not enough to count; but—I watched. I thought it did.

“I made the best acquaintance with him I could. It’s hard for a pastor to get full confidence. I bade him good-bye at the wharf when he went away, and wrote him in the winter when I heard his older brother, the mainstay of the family, had died. But he came back drunk this spring. I was disappointed—thoroughly vexed.

“Matters went on much as before, till one day, when the factories had been running day and

night for a fortnight, and all hands were out of sorts, and it was hot and the fish kept coming; then the 'Resurrection' caught fire in the sealing room and that stopped work for a week of repairs. The women, mostly, had work at home; but the men had nothing to do, and were tired enough not to care to do anything worth while. Some took the chance for a rest, some for a spree.

"One day three of the young men, Guy among them, went over to Highton in a small cat-boat. A man who goes fishing with the devil does n't confess what he is fishing for till he gets his hook in the fish. Of course they found what they did n't go after !

"Coming back they bore straight for the wharf, lee bow on, with a beam wind and close hauled. I was down there.

" 'Luff ! why do n't you luff ? ' I shouted.

"George Salter stood with his arm around the mast. 'Been a luffin' her all day, cap'n,' and he laughed so at his own drunken wit that he nearly fell overboard. My hair was rising and I felt like a frost. They struck the corner of the wharf. George Salter pitched headlong into a scow loaded with coal. Henley jumped over-

board and floundered ashore. But Guy had the tiller and his feet were snarled in the sheet. He went down with the boat.

"I whipped down to the beach and pushed off in a punt; but Rob Arthur was ahead of me in a dory, with a boat-hook, and in a very few minutes Guy was stretched on the beach. Then the reaction came; every one lost his wits. As much as I've lived by the water I am ashamed to say I never learned to revive the drowned. Who do you think did it? Nan Rhodes. She stamped her foot at the gaping crowd, pushed them back, tore off her apron-string and tied his tongue, squeezed the water out of him, pushed a block of wood under his shoulders, and was pumping breath into him in about the time I take to tell it."

"That saved him, evidently."

"It saved his life, doctor," Shepard replied, slowly. "Whether it saved him or not I don't know. I'd feel more certain if he crossed the line."

"To the Provinces?" I asked.

He leaned upon his hand, gazed at me thoughtfully, and said quietly: "'Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things

are passed away; behold, all things are become new.'"

I thought of the scene on the beach on the memorable night of Guy's battle with temptation, and his ringing words.

"Why do n't you talk religion to him?" I asked as dryly as I could. "Perhaps it's a favorable time."

"That's a hard question. Young men fight shy of it. They do n't like to acknowledge that they need it. They do n't want to be religious till they can't help it. You know Beecher once said that so long as all goes smoothly men imagine themselves equal to driving their own team, but when affairs begin to run away with them they cry out, 'Where's God? Where's God?' Now the only time when men feel the need of God's help in temptation is apt to be when it is too late; God can't help a man much when the bottle is half-way to his mouth."

"Perhaps this young man is not of that kind," I said, feeling the matter ought to be helped on, but loth to disclose an interest.

"I hope not. Still,—he keeps in his shell. Young men do n't realize the need of better companions, and it's hard for us to say we can help

them. I stood by the revolving dryer in the 'Butternut' one day and watched a flaker stand upon it, inside, and try to swing it. Nat Murray came along. 'What are you trying to do?' he drawled,—'lift yourself by your boots?' Morally, men try to do the same."

"Who's Nat Murray?" I queried.

Shepard brightened, and laughed merrily.

"Oh, he's Nat Murray,—a part of your new, unexplored country. Discover him yourself. You'll find him by the fryer in the 'Butternut'—if he has n't changed his post—with Yankee features, wit and philosophy traced on every line, pondering something deeper than the pan of boiling oil where he watches the fish. Or if he sits and waits for fish you'll find him reading."

For the present I had heard enough of moral philosophy, though graphically illustrated. I changed the subject.

"How do you celebrate the Fourth?"

"Next week, eh?" Shepard smiled and his eyes looked afar, reminiscently. "Oh, in the usual down-east way: calithumpians, boat, bicycle, sack and potato races, with perhaps a greased pig or pole. Of course there are some unique features. The factories will furnish their

specialties, I'll warrant." The far-away look became anxious and perplexed. "There may be a sort of celebration you will hardly care to hear about to-day."

He turned again to his desk. I crossed to the window, and watched the sea, meditatively. Unshared, each of us held a vague prophecy of the Fourth.

CHAPTER IV

A DOWN-EAST FOURTH

"It is a royal thing to be ill spoken of for good deeds."—*Marcus Aurelius*.

"I am not of that feather to shake off my friend when he most needs me."—*Shakespeare*.

"Music is the universal language of the world."—*Longfellow*.

I DOZED through the clamor of factory bells, whistles and fish-horns in the early hours of the Fourth. But the irresistible brilliancy of the morning sky at my east window passed the swinging gates of my drowsy eyes and set me watching the magic changes of the cloud scenery. It was a rare morning, with a cool northwest wind that dispelled any fears of afternoon showers. The lawn was wet and sparkling with heavy dew as, after breakfast, I tiptoed across it and sat on one of the rustic seats to watch the initiatory scenes of Independence Day.

Activity was stirring in the air. There were sudden bursts of cannon-crackers, snaps and pops and roars and toots, between quiet intervals

when the robin's whistle sounded as placid as on other mornings. The accelerated gait was noticeable. Men and boys were hurrying to the old wharf at the farthest end of the town where the procession of "calithumpians" or "horribles" was forming.

I could see the long, swinging line as they passed through the 'Acre,' visible down and beyond the vacant lots. The crowd soon hid them from view, then all were lost to sight as they turned and wound their way through the town, street by street, up the hill, and burst upon us with full din. A cavalry of Indians—genuine specimens of the down-east tribes from the reservation, arrayed in a combination of war-paint and feathers—and maskers in striped trousers and coats in all picturesque conceptions of Uncle Sam, led the procession. I am scarcely so quick of vision or so expert and sound in memory as to note or recall all the grotesque scenes of that pantomime. But some of it returns to vary or decorate the character of this tale.

There were the children of the schools in bright costume, drawn in gaily decorated hay-racks, their cheery piping of patriotic songs rising amid the accompanying racket. There were base-

ball clubs from the "Salt-box" and the "Butternut" in their field uniforms, ready for the afternoon's battle. There was mimicry of all local industries; the clothier's "Never-Shrink Trousers" advertised by a pant-clad mule, the flat, stale joke of the milkman's "Best Cow" by a pump in a milk-cart, drizzling a stream of water from tub to can.

There was the

"ECHO BLUFFS MEDICAL PERFESSION:—

Eyes amputated, ten cents.

Black eyes whitewashed, four cents.

Legs sawed off, one dollar and a half.

Proprietors of Dow's Eye Opener. Cures all weak spines, acid sores, and heart disease. Two for a quarter."

In the long, low cart that contained the professional body, the mock processes of surgery and compounding were conducted. The nature of "Dow's Eye Opener," was easily guessed. But I turned to my landlord who sat near me and asked,—

"What's an acid sore?"

He chuckled. "The soldering acid poisons their hands in the shops, sir. They say the only thing that will cure it is something that will cure anything else."

There was the local Civic League's contribution :—

"SHERIFF SMILES ON THE WAR PATH."

An empty calf-pen drawn on wheels by mules was driven by a boy in the mask of an ass. Around it walked "Thieves," "Sneaks," "Pocket-peddlers," "Scudgel-venders," and "Owls," bearing their conspicuous signs, and men built out into forms of bottles and jugs. The "sheriff" lay on his back on the calf-pen, blazing with his long rifle at the sky.

The last scene of the many was genuinely artistic—in the sense that there is real art in what is true to life or nature. A large rectangular box was drawn on a huge, low truck-body, its two sides open to public view—built on the relative proportions of a sardine case. Within was a representation of the sardine industry. There were youngsters slashing fish-heads, and a red-socked, overshoe, oil-aproned overseer with a Scotch cap, handling his dipping-net over the tank. A shrewd, merry, twinkling face stood over a fryer, girls' fingers were flying over the tin cans, and even the charcoal stoves and hot coppers were hissing in a corner where the sealers were bent

over their work. Hung from the upper side of the huge box was the sign,—

“A CASE OF SARDINES.”

An hour later we strolled leisurely to the ball-field. The horribles had disbanded and the sports had begun. It was a jolly, sober, good-natured crowd. Remembering the moonlight drama on the beach I looked for some evidence of Jerry Phail's scheme. There was none.

We watched the sack race, the potato race, the tug of war with its hoarse, shouting, tugging, panting opponents and the ultimate victory of the “Scrimmage” over the “Resurrection.” Last of all Bob Derrah won the cheese from the top of the greased pole by virtue of boot-heels and teeth. With a roar of delight the crowd broke loose in hurrahs and yells, and turned more ravenously to the lunch-stand which had been patronized in a desultory fashion throughout the forenoon.

Accustomed in professional life to irregularity of diet I followed the fashion of the crowd and remained through the noon hour. Some strayed off to the ball-ground to watch the game, but the larger stream of humanity flowed

toward the full tide at the wharf, and the water sports began.

While the racing yachts were bending the farthest goal I discovered Shepard, merged in the crowd, standing absorbed and absent-minded. I studied his face, curious to discover if, like myself, he had some inclination to moods. He turned as if conscious of a spectator and met my gaze.

"Ho, Marshall!" he called, with his usual ease, as he came toward me, "are you one of the boys?"

"Yes; and as full of questions as a boy," I replied, and produced them, as they had been heaping in my mind through the day; for the novel scenes and incidents and characters of that eastern clime grew more distinctly original with each day's observation. We paced about on open ground and chatted and watched the home-bound yachts and the shifting, noisy, waiting crowd. A few faces were flushed, and some tongues were set free with the looseness of liquored brains. Shepard cast frequent glances anxiously here and there, and his replies to my queries grew more abstracted. He burst out finally,—

"Have you seen Guy Wilson?"

"Certainly," I replied. "If that is what has bothered you the past half-hour, look for yourself." I swept my hand towards an opposite wharf, where Guy sat in its cool shade, half hidden by a young woman who stood before him.

Shepard watched them silently. I saw an expression of relief creeping over his face.

"Are you satisfied?" I asked.

"Yes," he said simply, "it's Nan Rhodes."

"Oh!" It was my turn to show quickened interest.

"It's all right, Marshall," he said with a cheerful smile. "I'm anxious to know how Guy behaves on these occasions. Come over and see them."

We crossed the sands and I met the young man, thinking, meanwhile, as I recalled that moonlight drama, that I knew him far more fully than he supposed. The young woman's clear gray eyes, as she gave me a cordial hand grasp, met mine with a frankness that suddenly deepened into reserve as she read my thoughtless curiosity. She turned to her pastor inquiringly.

"I hope you'll be hard and fast acquaintances," Shepard said with a reassuring smile.

We fell into an easy talk of the day and its occurrences until Nan Rhodes' reserve vanished and she chatted freely. Guy Wilson listened, taciturn; as preoccupied as Shepard had been. I beset myself to thaw his ice, and while busy with this arduous task I heard Nan asking Shepard in a low tone,—

“Where's Jenny Kent?”

“Off with her own associates,” replied Shepard, uneasily. “You know them. Are you sure you have the right idea of her, Nan?”

“Certainly,” she said with quiet dignity. “If the girls follow her it's for good company's sake. She goes with them because they like her. It flatters her. But it would be better for some one else to flatter her in a better way. She never saw bad company before she came here; if something is n't done soon she'll see very little more good company,—that's certain! I'll find her,” she said energetically, and departed in haste.

Guy murmured an indistinct apology and followed.

A calm on the water had left the yachts drifting slowly, sometimes quickened by a light puff. The crowd, satiated with sport and impatient at the delay of the lagging yachts, was surging

restlessly. There was a sense of expectancy, sidewise glances, a searching or waiting. The atmosphere grew tense. A hoarse voice broke out,—

“Gawd only knows how dry—I—am!”

Shepard shrugged his shoulders.

“Coming at last,” he muttered. “It was all right so long as they were having a good time.”

We caught a glimpse of Nan Rhodes among a medley of girls, some with loud gayety of dress and manner, some plain and coarse in type and garb. One of them, a ringleader apparently, not so flashily overdressed as were some, carried a jaunty independence—a swagger, if it is to be well named, and its application to a girl allowed. Nan, too, had dropped her natural grace and dignity for careless abandon.

“Come on, Jennie,” she was saying; “take the girls and come over to the ledge. Let’s have a sing.”

Shepard started as if stung. A sneer fell from a woman watching the scene from a carriage close by. Nan drew the girls after her to a deserted spot not far away where a ledge cropped from the rising ground above the shore. She seated herself on the rock, and the girls gathered

about her,—some with timid interest, some staring with open-mouthed, vulgar curiosity. A peculiar thrill ran through me and a sense of the incongruousness of the scene struck me when I heard the first rich notes of her song.

“There’s the bra-a-s-s ba-a-nd,” drawled a sporty fellow, to his tittering companion.

I caught comments that threw me into a heat of vexation. Shepard shook his head as I turned an inquiring glance toward him.

“That’s a slip of good sense,” he said, sorrowfully. “She never did such a thing before. It’s a case of casting pearls before swine, I’m afraid.”

“The swine are there, sure-enough,” I replied with contempt.

But the crowd was turning toward the singer approvingly. She sat there, apparently unconscious of them, looking at the little knot of girls, singing as if for herself and them alone, heedless of gathering numbers and interest.

“Nan’s all right,” a hearty boatman said, turning and nodding to the men behind him.

Then the first stanza of “My country, ’t is of thee” roused the latent spirit of patriotism. Voices joined, and when the second was reached

the crowd caught it up and swayed with the vibrations of the song as it rang out over the sea. Still Nan paid no heed to her surroundings. She sang on, to the last verse, when the music rose from fewer voices, for lack of familiarity. Then she looked out across the waters before her, and the emotion that was beating in her heart rose to her eyes and quivered in her voice.

“Jesus, Lover of my soul!
Let me to thy bosom fly,
While the nearer waters roll
While the tempest still is high;
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
Till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide,
O receive my soul at last !”

The crowd was pressing nearer ; all pretense of reserve or lack of interest had vanished. Nan hesitated, as if the presence of the audience would force itself upon her. A bloated, tattered sot who had been hanging upon the edge of the crowd and making it veritably ragged, pushed into the little space that surrounded her and said,—

“Sing it again, Nan.”

She sang the hymn to the close. Yes, and three times more, at his monotonous, maudlin re-

quest. Then he turned and straightened with a tragic dignity, and addressed the motley gathering.

"That's my mother's bes' song. You know me. I'm Hugh An'erson, minister's son,—devil of a minister's son, I be! What would my mother say now? She'd say I'm a devil, I guess. I d'n'o. Always called me bes' boy. Sing it again, won't ye, Nan, dear?"

But Guy Wilson's voice was ringing through the company, strong and hearty. For the moment, with its commonplace, wholesome sound, I seemed to be in the wholesome and hearty atmosphere of manhood and sound life,—as indeed, in a sense, I was, for it was there.

"All hands wanted at Mrs. Cook's for fish chow-ow-ow-der! Fish chow-ow-ow-der! Ten cents for all you can eat!"

"Hooray!"

"We're it!"

"Bring it on!"

"Set 'em up again!"

They turned and surged across lots to the rear of Mrs. Cook's house, disappearing around the corner. I saw Guy following with the bevy of girls, waved on by Nan's urging hand. Then she

came languidly and alone, and smiled as she paused where I was standing.

"They care more for chowder than for song, don't they?" she queried. "Do you like to see men eat?"

I stared. My thoughts rushed to my lips.

"I've more concern for you than for fish chowder, or for any man's appetite," I said bluntly.

She read my thoughts. Her smile died. "There might be worse appetites, might n't there?" she asked coolly.

"What of it? You've advertised yourself as roundly as the chowder. People"—

Her face stiffened; her sensitive lips quivered. She stamped her foot, as her cold eyes flashed fire. "*The people!* If they've any fish of their own to pack, let them pack them!"

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CHAPTER V

AT BREAK O' DAY

"I see not but that my way . . . lieth through this very valley."—*John Bunyan*.

A LOVE of medical science, inherited from my father, had been the absorbing passion of my life. The charm of philosophy and literature that became diversions in student life might be credited to the artistic tastes of my mother. But the thoughts and schemes and passions transcribed by literary lights were to me objects for dissection or diagnosis. Emotion and I were not friends. I probed the wounds of the poet, felt the pulse of the philosopher, and analyzed the secretions and excretions of the novelist, crediting myself with a fine distinction between the normal and the abnormal. Dante Alighieri might have had no charm for me had he not been so fine an ancient specimen of morbid anatomy.

As for the passions and acts of living men, they were scarcely subject to analysis. More of law

seemed to underlie the phenomena of the most variable disease. The religion which was supposed to be the solvent of human problems and to combine with all elements of humanity seemed to work with uncertain chemistry. With a physician's repugnance to self-examination I cherished my mother's faith in a God, but cared neither for experiment nor dissection in things so subtle. It was easier to assent or dissent to the formulas of the Church and the diagnosis or prescription of the clergy,—and far less painful.

From the by-lanes of the large village where my father practised I carried some memories of nature. The purposes of education brought us to the city. My practice began among that numerous class who in the struggle for gain, wilfully or unwittingly force physical powers or barter them for pleasure, and look to the mechanics of the physician with easy faith in his power—caring only to be alleviated or stimulated, in order to plunge into the whirl again.

My natural cynicism antidoted any philanthropic symptoms. With all my enthusiasm for my science and its success, my sympathies died in contact with increasing knowledge of the wilful and obtuse abuse of the body. Sometimes

when an occasional consultation called me down town to the pathetic wretchedness of the poor, I had a desire to perform some surgical operation on society as a heroic remedy of conditions. But the fact always came back to me that I had neither sufficient patience nor wit to interfere with the existing order.

Then I, too, began to snap the threads of vitality in the dry atmosphere of unceasing work and study, and the personal ambitions that made self-forgetfulness and recreation impossible. The down-east trip was the only promising remedy. "The sooner away and back the better," thought I. And when the first days at Echo Bluffs had flung the same variableness and imperfection of human life before me, instead of yielding to the harmonious quiet of a coast town sleeping on the breast of the sea I felt a fierce resentment that I had met Paul Shepard and that his problems had been forced upon me.

But it was an irresistible atmosphere. The fine air that followed a short period of unusual heat sent a new thrill through the body. A keen sense of the beautiful, hitherto latent, became active. The charm, the strangeness, the uniqueness, the pathos and the humor, of the

new world brought a reincarnation. The scientific mind seemed a part of the far-off city life and work. The artistic and romantic nature was awaking.

When the sea air strode into my room on the morning after the Fourth, such a living thing that it seemed almost to speak, I lay in my bed, admitting new thoughts to my mind. Outside, the odd music of the cow-bells tummed and dummed and tanged, and seemed a part of a new harmony. To make myself a part of this new world—why not? To feel its pulse, to study its phases,—a new interest and love, a selfish one to be sure, was throbbing. Here was imperfect humanity in a perfect atmosphere. Here was poverty in a wealth of scenery and air. Here were vice and the test of a far-famed prohibitory law, repugnant to the liberty and license-loving cosmopolitan. Here were homes and home life with all opportunity of open acquaintance; a society without social restrictions, for a common labor and manner of life bred frankness and freedom; and among older residents of another class here was the quiet culture of New England's isolated towns.

I forgot the cause of my coming. I forgot the

nervous dread of contact with actual conditions and real passions, and that I wanted freedom from social contact and human disorders. I flung on my clothing with a boy's enthusiastic delight in a new, fresh day, forgetful of self. I ate my breakfast regardless of my old languor, and strode down town with the uplifting wings of the morning and a keen sense of expectancy.

"Good-morning, sor. Oh, beggin' yer pardon! Oi thought it war-r-r th' minister. Good clo'es do n't walk down here so often on other men's legs. Well, well, the oil an' th' grase an' th' smell an' th' Lorrd knows what keeps 'em away, an' not to blame ayther. Oi see now. It's you was on th' dock yistherday whin th' Silas was loadin', an' they said you was a doctor. Yis, yis. Well, might I ask, are ye here to visit patients or to visit yer frinds?"

He straightened his stooped back where he leaned over his scythe. In the little patch close by the "Shamrock's" labeling-shed the sparkling swaths of dewy grass lay back from the fence. This Irish version of Father Time fairly scintillated with good fellowship. The twinkles of his clear, audacious eyes radiated into crow's feet and disappeared in the white whiskers that straggled

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down his face and wreathed his throat. His voice was as leisurely as his manner. He gulped another strawberry and smacked his lips.

I caught his mood. "I'm visiting the country," I replied.

"Ah-h! Yis, yis. I s'pose so. Well! well! I was minded be me own quistion of a doctorr that lived here odd years ago. He was a gude man, well enough, but he kept a-crookin' his elbow. An' one day Sandy Watson said to him, said he, one night whin he saw him drivin' out like all-possessed, said he, 'Where be ye goin' to-night, doctorr? Who's sick?' Th' doctorr whoaed his horse a bit and laughed. 'Nobuddy,' said he; 'I'm goin' out to see me frinds,' said he. Sandy looked solemn—he could look solemn as a praste, Sandy could. 'Well, doctorr,' said he, 'take care o' yoursilf whin ye visit yer frinds. If ye do n't, ye won't have any patients. An' thin,' says he, 'whin ye do n't have any patients, hoo long do ye think ye'll have any frinds?'"

I reached through the fence and picked a bunch of the mown grass and pressed it, dewy and fragrant as the morning, to my face. "A fine little field you have here, Mr.—ah?"

"Ryan is me name, sor. Yis, yis. It's th'

A'mighty's design that his cratures should all go to grass, like cattle. It don't grow by th' strates of th' city. Ah-h me, what a pity! Now I like nothin' so well"—his merry eyes twinkled—"as to git out in th' grass with me scythe, after th' Fourrth, an' whack away, an' see it pile up, an' smell it, an'—ah-h me!"

I caught a glimpse of a little yellow head bobbing among the daisies on a far-away hillside. "The children fancy it too," I commented.

"Oh, th' tor-r-mented, plaguey children! They git down on their knees in th' grass, an' spread their skirts out in it, an' flatten it down like a hen on her nest. It's wonderful," he continued, with a grasp at another strawberry, "how th' A'mighty provides for his cratures. Fust strawberries, thin blueberries, thin raspberries, thin cranberries. Ah-h me! Do ye know, thim sneakin' idjiots from th' factory was up in th' grocer's strawberry garrden yistherday, an' he an' all th' men on his new barrn shoood at 'em, an' thin they had to go an' drive 'em off. Did ye ever see th' loike of it? Well! well! it takes all sorrts of people to make th' worrld, they say."

The partiality of the Almighty's provision touched my humor.

"Have ye inthrusted yersilf in our indoosthries, doctorr? I see ye about th' factories sometimes with th' minister. Well, well, he's inthrusted in th' spiritooal welfare of th' people, I suppose, but he's shtruck a hard case whin he thries th' sardiners. Why, I've heard Father Maloney say in th' four years he's been comin' over, 'They's not one of 'em comes to confession,' says he. Dearie me! he's done all he can, th' praste has. But what can ye do whin a man won't confess his sins, no more nor if he had n't any? Well! well! It's a thrivin' indoosthry for th' town, no doubt, an' some owners gits rich, an' some fails, an' some gits burnt out whin fish is scarce, an' it helps trade, an' I suppose poor folks mus' git a livin' somehow. Well! well! here's Jake Rook afther me oars ag'in, I s'pose."

A heavy figure with a round, merry face, a fisherman's beard, and a jaunty slouched hat, swung up to the fence.

"Hey, Father Ryan! I want your oars! George Kesar! mine hain't come back. I s'pose that pound 's loppin' full, an' the tide sarves in an hour and a half."

"Yis, yis! Well, well! I s'pose so. Misther

Rook, I'll inthrodooce Dr. Dee, an' mebbe he'll help ye pull yer pound if ye ask him."

"Hi! Well, lemme git them oars, by Keesar! Tell him about it, Ryan, an' if he wants to go, send him on."

He scurried over the bank to the boathouse.

"There's a chance fer ye, doctorr, if ye like amoosement. Jake's good company, an' he always has boys with him. Go see him fish his weir, if ye loike."

"Where?"

"Well, ye see th' island, beyant?"

"Yes. How far is it?"

"Well! well! that depinds on which ind uv th' glass ye hold to yer eye. If ye hold th' big ind it makes a proper distance. It's three mile. Now go 'long if ye want to ketch him on th' shore, an' good luck!"

We were soon pushing from the shore, Jake Rook, myself, and the boys,—John Hunt, Joe Arthur and Tom Horton. Tom pulled out past the wharves where the morning breeze swept across the water, and with sail set we leaped across the ripples.

A herring weir is as difficult to describe to the uninitiated as the rationale of homeopathy to the

old school. However, if you will represent to your eye a fence of saplings and brush running direct from shore a hundred feet into the water and meeting a narrow opening in a circular fence of the same material a hundred feet in diameter, more or less, and which, therefore, extends that distance farther into the sea, you will have an idea of a herring weir. It has the surface form of a tennis racket with openings near the handle, arranged so that the fish enter but will not return. Herring, whether the tide be ebbing or flowing, are inclined to follow a shore. The long fence or "leader" turns their course and they sweep into the narrow opening of the circle or weir. Once inside they swim the circle regardless of the narrow entrance.

The weirs are usually seined on the low water slack. The tide then, for a time, is motionless. Usually two or more men own a weir, though some weirs are the property of factories. The instrument used for seining a weir is a seine; a huge hammock-shaped net between one hundred and one hundred and fifty feet long, ten to eighteen feet wide at the ends, and fifteen to thirty at the middle. A pursing line passes through iron rings along one side (the bottom

edge) of the net. This seine is usually kept wound over a huge reel on a floating raft.

At low tide, whatever time of day or night, the seine is transferred to a weir boat, which enters the weir. One end of the seine is made fast to the weir, then, unreeling it, the boatmen draw it around the inside of the weir until the ends meet. The circle is narrowed according to the size of the body of fish, and the pursing line finally drawn, which closes the bottom of the seine; then the top is drawn together. There is a haul of fish, whether great or small, that would make the eyes of an Adirondack trout fisherman, who by chance had never seen a seine, glisten with delight.

"There, boys, we're here. By mighty! Ain't so many as I thought the'd be. Howsomever, we'll take what the' is. Here, Joe, you unreel that seine. Look lively now! There, John, drive your stake. Say Mr,—a—a—doctor,—you jest git on th' raft naow, please, an' you'll save yer clo'es, an' won't be in th' way, nuther, an' we'll show yer some fun, by Keesar! Tom, pass up th' boat-hooks. Now, all ready? Say when yer mad. Steady now. Don't get excited."

One end of the seine was fast. They thrust their boat-hooks into the side of the weir and drew the boat around the circle. Jake drew steadily and silently ; the boys,—boy-fashion.

“Why do n’t yer pull?”

“Pull yerself! I’m pullin’.”

“Now, boys,” said Jake, “steady there. Give me room fer my feet.”

“John do n’t pull a pound,” cried Tom, slacking. John chuckled and slacked his pole instantly. The boat jumped backward with the weight of the seine. Jake nearly fell over the prow.

“Mighty! Boys, what ye doin’? Steady now!”

Joe Arthur pulled quietly and steadily, laughing at Tom’s excited efforts. Tom thrust his pole forward and caught it with a vigorous jerk on a weak stake in the weir. Instantly with the snap of the stake he fell backward into the bilge and fish slime in the bottom of the weir-boat, and scrambled up again, gasping, the slime rolling down between overalls and trousers, his hair shining with fish-scales. Jake roared.

“Haw! haw! haw! There! What’d I tell ye? Hey, doctor, we’ve got a new species o’

fish here. Look at him. What d'ye think he'll weigh? You boys have hard work to set yourselves tew work, let alone each other. You'll do better now. Here we are. Now, Joe, gimme an end an' we'll purse 'em up."

Then the fun began. The herring stampeded. Pollock drove them about in the narrowing circle. Sculpin drove them up from below, squid seized them at the surface. Water writhed and flew.

"Cracky, boys!" cried Tom. "Look at that toad sculpin! Hi, John, poke him, go for him! Here, that big pu'ssy one—gimme the oar." He snatched it, and with sure aim drove its blade against an enormous sculpin. The sculpin spat out his mouthful of herring and darted through the school of fish. Joe grabbed another oar,—punching Tom's waist,—and plunged the oar into the churning, spluttering mass. Here and there a conger-eel wriggled about, like an inspecting imp. Jake plied his dip-net with a good-natured grin, glancing at me occasionally as I stood on the raft and shook with merriment.

"Ef a feller hain't been a boy fer a good while, doctor, it's worth while to have a few 'round ye to see how they act!"

CHAPTER VI

SARDINES AND SOULS

"Friendships begin with liking or gratitude—roots that can be pulled up."—*Emerson*.

How mental vigor holds the key to a true estimate of life! The flagged mind, drained of its force by each day's demands, has no vision beyond its irksome duties. Give it rest and food, and let it store reserve force; then it swings every worry to its pigeonhole, grapples every problem with a relish of vigorous exercise, looks out on a glorious world, and feasts eagerly on splendid anticipations and realizations. Before a month at Echo Bluffs was past I began to believe this to be true.

There was a bright Monday morning when we had just returned from a delightful spin out on a country road, and were entering the parsonage gate. A hoarse shout sounded up the hill. We turned and saw a panting man, his hand waving frantically. We leaped on our bicycles again and turned down the street.

"Dennis Greer's child's dying. His wife wants him baptized," gasped the man.

Shepard spurred on without a word. I followed. He turned at Water Street and a half-mile further slackened at an abandoned storehouse, which stood among a variety of buildings, tipped his wheel against a tree, and rushed in. I followed, up a creaking, shaky stair to a loft where rough boards divided the floor into apartments. A young mother on her knees by a neat, simple cot that seemed out of place in such surroundings wrung her hands and flung back her loose hair in spasmodic gestures over the quivering, panting form of a little child. A man stood in a corner near by with haggard, hopeless face and drooped shoulders, uttering at times such harsh, helpless cries, half sob, half groan, as men utter sometimes when they stand face to face with an unseen force which seems ruthlessly to rob them, and they realize the vanity of their own power. A girl sat on a rude home-made couch, smitten with silent grief. The woman evidently recognized me.

I saw in an instant that the end was near, and slipped my fingers over the hurrying pulse of the writhing child.

"Oh, doctor! Oh, how he suffers!"

"No, no," I said, my sympathies stirring; "this is not suffering. He is past that."

Shepard reached into a tiny closet for a bowl, and filling it with water stepped to the child's side. The mother hastily drew a white coverlet over the quivering form and smoothed the hair with a dainty touch. The room was suddenly quiet. Only the child's harsh breathing was heard.

"Joseph, I baptize thee into the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Receive into thy hands, O our Father, this child, free from the sins of earth, in the name of thy Son, our Master, who said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.' Draw nearer to thyself this father and mother, and comfort the sorrowing heart of this little girl. May they never forget that the child is with thee, nor cease to seek thy kingdom in purity and faith. Amen."

The child had grown quiet. The mother's eyes had not left his face. As his breath sank into a long, deep sigh the room grew intensely still. The man groaned again. The mother bowed her head and clutched my arm.

"He's gone, doctor!"

I hesitated. "Not yet," I said, with my finger covering the faint, rapid pulse; "he is passing quietly. This is nature's way of showing us that death is easy."

Shepard laid his hand on her shoulder. "Yes," he said, "it is God's way of showing that while it sometimes hurts to live it does not hurt to die."

When all was over, and we breathed again in the clear, glad, careless sunshine, I turned to Shepard. "Extreme unction, Paul?" I asked with surprise. "Do you baptize at death?"

"It was for their sakes, Marshall," he replied. "It was their request. It will comfort the mother. It will touch the father. God may make use of a form to open a door for the Spirit. It was no time to teach them the real meaning of baptism. There was but one thing to do,—and I did it."

We were passing the head of the wharves where the factories began.

"Let's turn about in the 'Resurrection,' Marshall."

We passed among the can-makers and went up-stairs to the sealing-room. Ordinarily visitors

are not allowed about the factories. Shepard had permanent permission to visit, and seemed to use the privilege wisely, seldom delaying work or spending time for more than a cordial greeting. While he paused among the sealers I strayed on, and turned the corner to the flaking-room and frying-pans.

I recognized Nat Murray at once. Perched by the fryer with a tattered *Ram's Horn* in his oily hands, waiting for fish from the dryer, a glint of humorous light pierced through his rough beard from hidden smiles, and stole like a sunrise into the clouds of his hair.

He glanced up and hailed me. "Say, come here! Doctors and ministers do n't wait for introductions, I s'pose," he added as I stepped cautiously around an oily tier of frying-baskets. "Well, I'm both. I cure fish and b'long to the order of fryers."

"Nat Murray, is it?" I asked. "I thought you were in the 'Butternut.'"

"No sir-ee! I've shifted my berth. You know a man with a family must have an element of shrewdness. I came where the grass is longer."

"Where's your predecessor? Out of a job?"

"What? T' other feller? Out in the cuttin'-

shed, thinkin' it over. He spoilt too many fish in the pan. He cooked 'em to death, an' that breaks 'em up. You see it do n't take long for a man to spoil the profit on a case of sardines. I had two helpers in the dry-house last year. Named 'em for John Bunyan's men, one Fool and one Want-wit. You remember they were the fellers that tried to wash the Ethiopian white, don't ye? The more they washed him the blacker he got,—p'r'aps somebody 'd tried to whitewash him once. Wal, to git back to the story, one o' these dry-house hands worked days, t' other nights. What one did n't spoil in the day t' other 'd spoil in the night.

"I s'pose you'll think—Take care, there! Look out fer grease," he said, as he swung a full basket from the fryer to the drain—"p'r'aps you'll think I'm hard on 'em. Wal, how 'd we know we had any faults if others did n't say so? Reminds me of how old Elder Jackson ketched a feller who talked about his neighbor. The elder stood it long 's he could; then he squelched him. 'Well,' said he,—the elder, I mean,—'if the other man's as bad as you say he is you'd better straighten out or you'll both find yourselves in the same place.'"

I turned down the long row of tables where the bare arms of women and girls danced above the oily fish. It was a striking illustration of individuality and homogeneity. Outwardly they were a "class." In reality the variety of faces was an evidence of diversity of nature. Tongues flashed words back and forth, but the hum of the air-blast in the sealing-room adjoining, and the clatter of cans obscured the sound. Tired women stood and toiled, wearily silent, and here and there a thoughtful girl bent over her work oblivious to all conversation. In the labeling-room it was quieter, and a dozen tongues rattled merrily. They paid little attention to me.

"Say, Bet, got yer third case done?"

"Yes."

"You do n't mean it!"

"Yes, I have!"

"Dell!"

"Well,—what?"

"Did you go to church yesterday?"

"Yes, and I'll never go again."

"Why not?"

"'Cause I won't. I hain't lived here all my days, I tell ye. I've heard some of the talentest preachers there is. What's the use to go here?"

"Oh, say, did you know Minister Stokes in Highton? How'd you like him?"

"Oh, he's all right!"

"Godfrey! You liked him?"

"Say, girls, I think McLellan's the best preacher ever lived."

"Pshaw! That Advent preacher that came 'round last summer's the best man. 'Minds me of Dick Currier."

"Dick Currier's out of a job last I heard."

"I heard Dick Currier preachin' at the poorhouse once."

"Preachin' at the poorhouse? Godfrey! I I do n't wonder he do n't have any luck."

"Say, where's the boss?"

"Down cellar."

"Say, he's milkin' the cow."

"Well, I've got to have some more labels. Pass me yours."

"Help yourself. I've got to get onto my job."

"Did you know Joe Cressey's lost his job?"

"Well, I'm goin' to leave, then."

"You'll have to if you do n't do better."

"I'd do more if my heart did n't trouble me so."

"Sorry fer yer. I told John not to hug anybody else, but he would do it." Then, in an undertone of compassion, "Say, that's bad. Better git some of Dell's heart trouble medicine."

"I'd rather have a cooky."

I passed on in season to catch a peculiar expression on Shepard's countenance as he stood at the opposite end of the apartment, talking with a serious-faced English woman.

"I would like for them to go to your Sunday-school if they can, sir. I would n't send them till I could see your superintendent or you. In Highton we go to the English church, sir, but there's none here, and the children do n't know what to do Sundays. I'm afraid, sir, they'll get bad company."

"My dear friend," he exclaimed with a gesture of sorrow, "do n't wait another week."

"Oh, what notions people get about our church work!" he cried, when we walked alone across the wharf.

That evening we finished a round of calls by a visit at an old factory used as a summer tenement.

It was pitch dark in the apartment beneath, used sometimes as a stable. Behind Shepard's

lead I stumbled up the stairs with my eye on a lighted crack at the top. He rapped, and a quiet voice replied,—

“Johnny, open the door. It’s the minister’s knock.”

“Good-evening, Mrs. Walker. This is my friend, Doctor Dee, of old acquaintance. We weren’t exactly boys together but attended the same college. He’s good company, you’ll find, and enjoys knowing my friends.”

His frank speech opened the way to acquaintance. Besides, my old professional air which, (with a distaste for wide and deep acquaintance), I had long worn as an armor was dropping apart at the joints in this salt atmosphere. I shook hands, and obeying Shepard’s gesture slipped into one of the two chairs, while he dropped quickly upon a sardine case, and the woman, with some hesitation, returned to the broken rocker.

“La, Mr. Shepard, it does me good to see you make yourself at home. He comes in any time I’m here,” she said, addressing me. “He knows what we are, and he’s always welcome. We’re poor sardiners. My husband’s dead, and the little gals must go to school in winter, so we

make all we can till December. Last year we made a hundred dollars right here. Oh, no, we don't belong here in town. We come from Stillbrook. Mr. Hamilton gives us the rent of this room."

The "room" was the end of the upper story of the factory, made by a short partition containing the door through which we entered, and a tier of sardine boxes completing the division. Behind the stove a rough boarding shut off, partly, a corner used as a bedchamber. Elsewhere in the building I heard rough laughter and the sound of young men's voices—evidently belonging to other tenants. The evening breeze sauntered in through broken panes, and rattled the wrapping-paper curtain. A formidable array of cutters' knives was stuck in the wall above the box which served as washstand. But a neat cloth on an old table, a clean chimney on a battered tin lamp, a half-dozen children's faces oddly and quietly attractive in comparison with their clothing and surroundings, and the beaming, satisfied face of the mother,—I thought of what Abraham Lincoln is quoted as saying, that God must have loved the common people best since he made more of them.

While we sat and chatted of the day's work and of other folk, and supplied each other's minds out of our widely different realms of thought and life, the youngest boy drew bashfully behind his mother's chair and kissed her.

"Good-night, Johnny. Say yer prayer."

CHAPTER VII

COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY

“Commoner natures
Pay you with what they do; nobler with what they are.”
—*Schiller*.

WE were talking of factory life in the gloaming of the next evening, in the parsonage sitting-room. A chilly fog had blown in from the sea. Mrs. Shepard had a cheery, crackling fire on the hearth, and by chance Nat Murray and Nan Rhodes were there. The lamps were unlighted. I sat in the side-shadows and watched the play of light over the young woman's face, as the flashes, like an artist's pencil, touched feature after feature, each touch hinting a deeper feature of the soul. There were the freshness of girlhood and the resolution of womanhood. The cheery flash of a light heart sometimes changed into a tone that strengthened my belief that a wider experience and culture lay behind the veil of her factory life.

I rehearsed the talk I had heard at the packing-tables. “Is that a fair sample?” I asked.

"Yes," she said with a gesture of repugnance, "it is. Those who don't talk in that way talk very little."

"I wonder if their thoughts are not better than their language," said Mrs. Shepard. "That is true of most of us."

"It is true of some of the girls. Some of them seem to have no thoughts. But if a person does n't know how to say a thing it may never be said. Sometimes there's no one to listen to what one might say. And after the girls do this light thinking and talking they can do no better. They want to think of something better, perhaps, and can't. And the best girls, and those who can think,—well, their table-mates don't help the matter."

"How is that?" asked Mrs. Shepard.

"When Katharine Holmes joined the church the girls teased her. 'How good the factory girls are getting to be!' What chance has Jennie Kent? You know her history, perhaps. Of course she is sensitive. She keeps up her light talk to cover her wounds. But she said to me, one day, 'Folks would be surprised if they could see what's inside of us girls who talk so.'"

"I find," Nat interrupted, "that while you

may think with the wise you must converse with the vulgar. Ef a man comes to your back door with a swill-pail you expect to fill it up with swill, don't ye? Natchelly. He ain't askin' fer bread. I ketched Sam Tophet talkin' one day about what he'd do ef he was rich. Says I, 'I'm as happy with a scrap o' poetry as you'd be with all you want. Ez fur as happiness is consarned,' says I, 'you might ez well be happy in a hut ez in a house. Happiness don't come from tackin' on the gildin'. No sir-ee! you do n't ketch that dame that way. She's just ez likely to come in where there's bark on the roof and moss in the chinks.' But my figures all fell, —on him. He could n't understand 'em because he wa' n't read up, you see. Might ez well read a Greek grammar to my cow."

"If the boys and girls were brought up to think it worth while to learn," said Nan, "it would make a great difference in factory life. The people come from small towns where the schools are n't what they ought to be. I know very little about the schools here; but the children are n't taught to care for the schools. Older folks say to them, 'What's the use of going to school? You'll forget it all.'"

"Conversation takes a religious bent at the shops, I notice," said I.

"Very often. They suppose what they think is right. If they do n't understand they guess. If they talk about the Bible, and can't agree, they say, 'If it had been intended for us to know we'd have known it; we ought not to be poking into it.' Oh, dear!" She tossed her head and laughed in merry despair.

"I would like to know what are the girls' thoughts of heaven," mused Mrs. Shepard.

"Oh, they do n't have many! They just live now!"

"Ef they could only grab up a few good ideas—out of the ditch—anywhere," argued Nat, "an' have good sense enough to put 'em together, they might strike a spark an' make a fire. But the minister's the only one that makes a business of furnishin' upper stories, an' his price is too low."

Shepard's frown was visible in the firelight.

"Take care, Nat!" said he. "Do n't forget that you and I never agree when you disparage the community. There are people here who care more for the sardine workers than the workers are willing to believe."

"Mr. Shepard," said Nat with a solemn shake,

"you ought to know. You go to 'Heaven' more 'n I do, and see the angels. But ef that Greek feller, Dodgenes, that walked 'round the streets lookin' fer an honest man, had struck the Bluffs any time since the sardine pack commenced he'd 'a' blowed out his lantern and gone home."

We laughed, except Shepard, who frowned more deeply.

"Perhaps Miss Rhodes has an opinion?" I interrogated, with burning curiosity.

"People are n't all alike. There are people who want to do good but don't know how. There are people who want to do good, but don't want to get their hands dirty. There is a kind of people who would pass down old clothes with a pole. It all comes to this—there are n't many whom the sardiners can call really good friends."

"'Really good friends!'" I retorted hastily. "Who finds them anywhere?"

She looked up in surprise. "Don't you?" she asked. "Perhaps you do n't need them. People who need them ought to have them, even if they do n't deserve them. Some deserve more than they get. I can't forget how Guy Wilson looked when he said, 'It's mighty lonely here. It's hard enough to have the world down on you

without having to knock your way into the church. It would n't be half so bad if there was some one to stand by and say, "You've done well. Stick to it." Guy is n't one of the sulky kind. Those words meant something."

"Whose fault is it?" asked Shepard sadly.

"O Mr. Shepard, you know I love the church. It's not all their fault. Guy can't realize how little they know him or can know him. The trouble is right here: folks who are not Christians think Christians do not care, and that when they say they do it is all put on. Of course that is n't right. But how is it that some who do care make them know it? There is n't one of them but knows you care; and your caring will leave its mark."

"Now you're getting at something practical," I cried. "Shepard's bowling-alley and sardine songsters are doing more good than his church!" This statement I knew by his frown hurt him. "What shall we do next?"

That "we" came spontaneously, and surprised me.

"Fer one thing," said Nat, "the men that sell rum ought to be horsewhipped in the street. They do n't care about payin' a fine; they make that up before night."

"How would the old ducking-stool do?" asked Mrs. Shepard.

"That would n't do any good; they'd dry off too quick. But it would take a long time to dry off the smart."

"Why not settle this matter locally?" I asked. "Why not have a citizens' caucus, and nominate officers independently of parties—men who would enforce the law? The parties have town caucuses in the spring, do they not?"

"Caucus!" chuckled Nat. "Not much! We know better now. We go all over town and ask, as the disciples did, 'What shall we receive therefor?' Who'd you think you'd git together? This town's like a field o' pertaters; the best of it's under ground. You know Hiram Brown? Well, he's a man who's pretty well filed. P'r'aps I should say he's a man that's posted and well informed. An agent arrived one day and asked him where the best citizens resided. Hi did n't take him up to 'Heaven'; he led him across lots to the cemetery."

"Where's 'Heaven'?" I asked.

"Just above 'Purgatory,'" he replied, with a tantalizing twinkle.

"'Purgatory' is the boarding-house district,"

said Shepard hastily. "It's a fancy here, you know, to give names to shops and places. 'Heaven' is colloquial for 'up town.'"

"Well," said I, "I've met excellent people there. Have they never tried to better affairs?"

"Yes; they met in Hoad's Hall one night last spring, jest before the rummiest 'lection we ever had, and drawed resolutions an' made speeches, an' prayed. But they could n't find men enough to make out the ticket. There was jest enough of 'em to do the prayin'. Ones they wanted wouldn't sarve. Ones that would sarve they did n't want. Ef they'd gone out some night when the wind was blowin' from the north and had blowed against it they'd have done as much; ef they'd gone home from business at six o'clock and gone to bed they'd have done more."

I looked at Shepard inquiringly. His head dropped on his breast in gloomy concession.

Nan Rhodes arose. "May I see the children before I go, Mrs. Shepard," she asked wistfully.

"Why, certainly," said Mrs. Shepard, rising with a smile of pleasure. "Margaret has just put Carl and Alice to bed. We will go together."

They passed out, and Shepard, Nat and I sat in

silence. We heard the merry greetings of the children as their visitor entered, and the chatter of happy tongues. Then a voice of subdued song stole from the chamber. It was a German lullaby. I had heard it frequently in professional visits at the Kinder Anstalt in my city practice; but how came this girl in possession of German song and a German accent which she had never revealed before?



“Wann die Kin-der schlaf-en ein, Wachen auf die



Ster - ne, und es stei - gen En - ge - lein



nie - der aus der Fer - ne, hal - ten wohl die



gan - ze Nacht bei den from-men Kindern Wacht Wann die



Kin-der schlafen ein wach-en auf die Ster-ne-lein.”

The song ceased, and a moment later a dark figure slipped through the hall, flinging back a cheery response to the children's "Good-night." But as she passed I heard distinctly the mastering of a sigh. The outer door opened and closed. The fire flickered with the draught.

"She's rare," commented Nat.

"Why, Marshall," exclaimed Shepard, "you're a living stethoscope! She opened her heart to-night."

"I only asked a question, and listened," I replied, gruffly.

Nat's eyes had a sober twinkle. "There's some people," he said, staring thoughtfully at the fire, "that takes ye all over the house ez if they had rooms to let. There's some that takes their guests into a receivin' room an' treats 'em politely; and when they find somebody they can trust they take 'em right in where they live."

Shepard roused from the silent mood that had possessed him during the evening. "I see where you stand, Marshall. You've lived in the throng. All of your associations, even in your professional work, have been with little contact with the moral and spiritual redemption of men. Now you are getting interested; and when a

man's first interest comes he expects to make easy work of it, no matter how impossible he had previously supposed the task to be. I've felt the same enthusiasm."

"But you've lost none of it, Paul. What more do you need but a little help and encouragement and,—funds, maybe? Our city churches thrive on institutional work. Of course I don't know much about it,—only they boom and bloom."

"Yes; I know their methods and points of success. I thought I'd found a fine chance here to imitate them. As you say, I've not lost my enthusiasm. Give me more funds and a few helpers, and I can do more to offset the devil's attractions than people here are willing to believe. But I've tried this work long enough to get some wisdom. Bowling-alley, sardine-shop meetings, good literature,—thank God for the machinery! Yet I am brought face to face with the fact that there is a limit to its power. It dawns upon me more and more that Nan is right."

"Right? How?"

He hesitated, reflecting. "There are some things that are spoiled by definition. There's

Nan, in the factories, and I suppose we might say she's right in being Nan Rhodes. Of course that does n't cover the ground, and we do n't belong in her place, so far as daily work is concerned. But if we were Nan"——

"Well, we're not," I replied. "Do your own part. Open doors of opportunity. Touch the reason and common sense. Make a sound life attractive. Is n't that right?"

"Certainly."

"If they won't stand on their feet what's the use to carry them? Point out the way. Stamp your foot, and say, 'Start!'"

"Well, Marshall, I've asked the same questions. There are a dozen arguments for the yea or the nay. There's only one real answer, and you may find it out of a summer's acquaintance. Nan evidently knows already more than I know, and does what I cannot. I sometimes think she loves more and they know it."

"Pshaw!" I exclaimed angrily; "what has love to do with hoodlums? They'd drown in a sea of it, asking for something to drink! It is n't safe to make indiscriminate associations."

Shepard smiled. "You still argue for machine-made men, Marshall. Never mind, we can only

say we are dealing with human nature, not with metal and wood. We are both in the dusk. I wish I could stand for a day where Nan stands, and know these lives as she knows them. I might have more of the love that passes knowledge."

He sprang to his feet with an expressive gesture. "Do you see that dictionary? There's English, in all its purity, in stately alphabetical arrangement. Out of it one man may make obscene language or vile literature, another a song, another a sympathetic talk or a prayer; one man may make a plea for his country's good, and a poet can fashion a dozen of its words into a thought that will touch a million lives. What do ten letters spell? F-r-i-e-n-d-s-h-i-p! What does it mean? I tell you"—he smote his fist against his open palm and strode across the room, a picture of a man spurred by inward longings,—“it makes a vast difference who spells it. When Nan Rhodes does it—no matter whether by talk or song or rolling up another girl's sleeve, or by a look, or just by living!—it means more than you or I can make it mean. Preacher though I am, and a lover of men and no idler in their service, I'd give half my life to make

those letters express in the rest what she makes me feel they ought. Oh, it's such a simple life! But it's a mystery. Not all the words of the English tongue could express it. You can only know her, and see, and guess the rest; and some day you may wish that you were she."

For a moment I did. Then the old tide of resentment flowed back, and I could see only the loss of time and labor and sentiment expended on the unthankful; and I felt a stirring vexation at the rising and falling emotions of the evening.

"Fact is," said Nat, wagging his head thoughtfully, "if there's anything in another girl worth loving, Nan can't help loving her. 'Minds me of a story. Some years ago, when I was a boy, when old Parson Harriman was here he had a young minister studyin' with him. Parson Harriman was a-learnin' him how to preach. The young man was a pretty stiddy feller, but he went with one of the girls too much to suit. A good girl she was, but she did n't b'long to the upper crust. So when the neighbors thought the tide was gettin' a leetle too high they took their tongues and went to the parsonage. They asked the young man what he meant by such actions. They labored with him pretty strong, an' tried to

convince him he'd lose his influence an' mebbe ruin the church if he married her. He listened till they got through. 'Well,' said he, 'the truth is, I love the little sinner.'"

We laughed heartily. Shepard's old brightness returned.

"Love is the fulfilling of the law," he said. "Well, Marshall, get acquainted! You've no influence or social standing to lose, and if you don't gain any you won't care. We want your help in our sociological machinery, and you may have plans worth using. Perhaps you'll fall in love with the people. They won't hurt you; you won't hurt them."

"I suppose a man may drift into surroundings where he can't resist temptation," I remarked with a tragicomic air.

"Ez fur ez my observation goes," flashed Nat, "the population here ain't tryin' to resist temptation. The majority of 'em 's 'round hunting it up!"

CHAPTER VIII

"A BOY'S WILL IS THE WIND'S WILL"

"The men who are not satisfied,—
They are the ones who lead;
They force humanity ahead
By strident word and deed;
They bring us out by bygone ways,
They guide us through the dark
To where some man, unsatisfied,
Has set a shining mark."

—*W. D. Nesbit.*

NAT had departed. Shepard and I still sat on opposite sides of the firelight's glow, smiling at his nonsense.

"Well, Paul," I continued, "you have a good grip on the boys in the cutting-shed, I notice. Sturdy little fellows, too."

His eyes shone. "The cutters begin life young. You've watched them? Of course. I saw you standing by the tables, watching Moody Hawkin's boy slice his finger. The fathers or mothers bring them in before the lisp is out of their tongues. They tie an oilcloth around them or put on the sack, stand them on a box, barefooted

and bareheaded, as you see them, and there's a picture of Young America, eastern type. Perhaps they can make five cents in an afternoon—the infants, I mean,—if their fingers are n't gashed. In a little time it makes them as independent as your newsboys.

"But as to manliness,—well, it's young manhood, sure enough, of its own type. Some are as honest as government gold. Some are so blissfully unconscious of any distinction between right and wrong it is hard to say a fault is a fault.

"I watched Grub Todd's tactics yesterday. He cuts behind the table in a corner of the 'Klondyke.' He stood in a tub of 'scoots' ankle deep, slashing like a veteran, the heads running down his trousers and bare limbs. His box was behind the tub. When Madsen passed the pay-checks he thumped on his box and called, 'Check!' whether it was full or not; and Madsen passed the check. When the whistle blew at noon Ted Smith called from the opposite row:—

"'How many cut, Grub?'

"'Got twenty-three checks,' Grub answered.

"'Nit! I only cut fifteen. That's more'n you can cut.'



"THE CUTTERS BEGIN LIFE YOUNG."



"Well, it do n't matter whether I cut 'em, I got 'em, that's the point,—see?"

"Ted crawled under the table and came up by his side. 'How'd ye do it?' he asked.

"Grub's pride was too much for his secretive-ness. 'Well, I bet my big-tipped knife I could do old Madsen outen nine boxes this morning,' he said.

"That was what Ted wanted. 'If you don't divvy I'll blow on ye,' he threatened.

"They squabbled and the fish flew. Some of the checks went down in the 'scoots.' Finally they compromised on gambling the stolen checks in 'the owl'—the slot-machine, you know—and went off happy. If they gambled all their checks they only followed a common custom. If they beat the machine they probably varied the program by investing in candy and soda or ginger ale."

"That's a delicious mixture of vice and virtue," I observed: "enterprise and self-help combined with roguery; profit-sharing secured by force and arbitration, and human happiness promoted by questionable means; all with an appearance of innocence that would rival a Croker. The moral question is lost in the mud."

"Not a bit!" said Shepard emphatically. "One end of it rests fairly on men who know better than the boys and do worse. That includes the men with the slot-machines, any manufacturer who will can a decaying fish, and any merchant who is willing to profit by selling the boys small drinks and cigarettes,—or any life that prefers the go-easy plan to a fight for character and fine influence, and so sets a bad example!" He tapped the hearth with his foot in emphasis.

"The boys have my sympathy," I said; "but what can you do without a change of surroundings?"

He shook his head dubiously. "That's the question. We must ask a more practical one: What will the boys do with themselves with things just as they are? They are not all alike. Some are bred in influences that make them morally weak; some know no better; some delight in deviltry. There are some who come out of good homes and run with the wind."

He leaned over his chair rail, and his eyes glowed. "Every boy likes to do what a man does. If some one tells him he can't, he wants to do it all the more. A boy thinks if he can

have a man's privileges then he's a man. To smoke and drink are common privileges of men whom my best boys know—to say nothing of foul language and worse things yet.

"Well, I go down street some day; I find a boy jingling pennies in his little trousers. 'I got ten cents to-day selling bottles, Mr. Shepard.' 'Is that so, George? Keep it and when you get enough help your mother buy your clothes.' (It's of no use to tell them not to gather the bottles.) 'Yes, sir.' 'But look out you never buy what goes into the bottles.' 'No, sir.'

"But the boy wants candy, naturally, and there's no one to teach him self-denial or to enforce it. Next comes the 'soft drink' stage. Harmless drinks, they are called. They are as harmless as a camp-fire in a dry summer! First, they teach the boy to spend money for what he does n't need and can't afford. Next, he likes to drink out of a bottle, as men do. Lastly, he would like to drink what the men drink, and men drink rum. So we hear of another boy drunk.

"I found four little chits behind the church one day, Marshall, and watched them through a crack in the horse-shed. They sat in a row, three of them whittling out wooden knives and

pistols, and listening to a cheap novel the other was reading. I cut across the 'Acre' one night, for a lamp in the 'Peacock's' office made me suspect mischief, and I 'peeked.' What do you think I saw? Four boys around the office table, and the ringleader was the owner's own son,—fifteen years old. Cards were on the table and a bottle of beer, or ale,—I suppose. The game was going on. 'Pass the bottle.' 'High game, Jim.' 'Deal 'em out again.' 'Pass the bottle; my whistle's dry.' They seemed to roll the words like sweets in the mouth. And the only one among them who did n't swear and did n't have a cigarette is a boy who, I know, prays every night at home. Do you think he knew what he was about? Not a bit. 'A good time to-night, while I'm a boy. This won't hurt me,—I'm all right.' That's what he thinks,—and thinks as little about it as he can. But how long before some one will pick him up drunk and carry him home to a mother who has no idea of what is going on, and would n't believe it if I told her? And he began it as innocently as my baby, whom I buried, spilt laudanum in the sugar and ate it because it was sweet."

His voice shook, but he pressed on. "A craze

to be a man, an itch to do things on the sly, an admiration of smart sin, a bad book, and an older bad boy: these are the beginning of half the misery and two-thirds of the crime. Listen!"

He drew a letter from his pocket, stirred the fire, and bent over it.

"Mr. Shepard, I would give the best day's wages I ever got to see you. You thought I had better tell you more about it, and I guess I will. You will never know how much good it has done me to tell what I have. You know I told you what a liking I had for novels. I used to laugh when some folks looked awful scared when I told what I read. I thought it would n't hurt me because I knew I could n't do anything like what I read. But I found one story somebody wrote about a boy down South that run off with a yacht and caught a lot of fish and brought the yacht back in the night and sold the fish for a pile of money. It seemed so real that I remembered it and told it to the boys one night when we rowed out to the *Vixen*, and climbed aboard, and went down in the cabin to see how it would seem to own a yacht. And then we planned it all out, but we did n't plan it right, somehow, and I'm in this awful scrape.

“‘O Mr. Shepard, you do n’t know when you start out with a lot of boys, you don’t know where you are going to stop! It seems as if one dared the other, and each one tries to act as if he did n’t care, and to be a little smarter than the rest. We don’t any of us like to be stumped. And before we get through showing off we’ve done something we knew better and did n’t think we ever would do.’”

“It sounds quite pitiful,” I observed.

“Yes, doctor. But we can patch up this matter. It’s not half so pitiful as the cases of boys who never get into a scrape to teach them a good lesson at the right time. Most of them go on to the end; novels, cards, sly smoking, nights out-of-doors, till the devil’s grip freezes on them. It is n’t because they want to do wrong; it’s because they want to do what they think men do, and to do as they please on the sly. ‘There is a way which seemeth right,’—actually, it seems all right!—‘but the end thereof are the ways of death.’”

“Look here, Shepard,” I broke out, “you’ll be spoiling my opinion of this old town if you turn out skeletons in shrouds of gloom, in this manner. Is n’t there anything rosy about it? Play

the Emerson a little while and give Carlyle a rest. You forget that I'm down here for mid-summer nights' dreams, and mermaids' songs, and a life without fashion or physic."

"I beg your pardon, Marshall. I forgot your harassed nerves. It harasses mine, sometimes. You know it is a pastor's business to be conscious of evil, even if it is good in the making."

He sighed; then his face brightened. "Oh, yes, there's another aspect. We have boys—and boys! That's a peculiarity here, you know. There are as many grades of humanity, mentally and morally, as in your city. Our bowling-alley and games count to satisfy some of the boys with a clean, healthy, good time. Lunt, the teacher in the district that includes the 'Acre' interested the schoolboys in a lyceum. If you could have heard some of the debates you'd have thought the country's salvation was just at hand. If you want to see how quickly a boy *can* get at the gist of a matter, put him on a debate. They can find the moral side of a question, too, whether they indicate it by character or not. When I'm blue it's a tonic to me to hear them.

"I keep a little reading-room here for young

men. They come in—seldom. We need one down town; but there is no one to run it yet. Monday nights some boys come to visit me, as you know, and we read, or talk, or play. But they are few—precious few! Nothing will reach all.

“If they would use their opportunities, we might raise Abraham Lincolns. But, of course, they don’t realize the need of every good influence, even if they dislike that which leaves a bad taste. Did you see where the corn in my garden is a foot higher than the rest? There is the richer soil. A boy can’t go to church without being better than he otherwise would be; he can’t stay away without losing more or less that will not be made up when he is a man. Our preaching isn’t what it ought to be, God knows—and sometimes we know it. But we try to preach a clean, pure, unselfish life, to be found as the disciples found it—by following Christ.”

He thrust his hands through his hair, in perplexity. “Making manhood out of boyhood is a serious thing. I can’t lead many of them by reason. When you know life in the sardine industry, as elsewhere, perhaps, you’ll say it is a state of nature. Vice is not always viciousness;

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it is unreasonableness. ‘A boy’s will is the wind’s will.’”

“Yes,” I replied, “and the thoughts of youth are short, short!”

He laid his hand upon the Bible that lay on the little table by the wall, with a firm touch, as if an emphatic thought was in his mind.

“‘Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.’”

CHAPTER IX

LIGHT FROM "HEAVEN"

"Sacrifice is the first element of civilization."—*W. D. Howells.*

THERE was to be a lawn party at Captain Noah Sinnett's residence, situated in that part of the town socially and topographically elevated, and designated as "Heaven" by the factory hands, who felt the gulf lying between in proportion to their own proximity to "The Acre," or, in the original and more lengthy term, "The Devil's Acre." How far that gulf was social and how far moral, how far real and how far imaginary, depends somewhat upon personal acquaintance and the point of view.

It is the privilege and function of the pastor in small communities to serve as a social priest and carry his incense to formal and informal affairs. This privilege and function are not limited or dependent upon acquaintance, influence, social gifts or caste. Shepard's acquaintance and friendships were necessarily of slow growth from the extent of his parish and the great diversity of his work ;

and the comparatively brief period of his pastorate had not given him large acquaintance apart from his church and the factories.

The invitations included me among the guests. It was one of those delightfully open-hearted socialities that are impossible in larger social circles. A country where profusion is characteristic of fresh air, scenery, sunshine, fog, salt water, consanguinity, and good red herring, makes a stint of acquaintance impossible in the circles of any class. In fact I saw so many informal greetings that I wondered if there were really any lines of social caste between the up-town and the down-town of Echo Bluffs.

When I found myself at liberty after a few delightful chats I cast my eyes among the Japanese lanterns that lit the lawn and the rambling piazza, expecting to see some of the forms that had become familiar to me. I caught glimpses of them here and there, and was reassured by recognizing a dozen connected with the sardine industry in office or shop; a fact which, as my acquaintance was limited, implied that there might be many more.

"There's a 'case of sardines' here, Shepard," I said complacently, as I turned at his side.

"Yes," he answered somewhat hastily with a frown at my innocent sally, and turned to exchange greetings with a newcomer approaching with Captain Sinnett.

"Now, doctor," said the captain, turning to me—he had a slow, deep, hearty voice, as robust as his physique,—“you ’re here to see the people, and the only way to see them by lantern light and moonlight is to talk, you know. But I want you up on the lookout first. Haven’t been up there by night, have you? No? Well, come up and see the sights.”

I followed him to an arbor built on a knoll west of the house. Shoreward the grounds were free from trees and shrubbery, and an arc of the horizon swept around the distant sky. The moon was too young to dim the starlight or the numerous lights that shone up from the town or on the water. A quarter mile down the shore the “Resurrection,” evidently over-freighted with fish, twinkled its lamps, and a long cloud of black smoke wound from its furnace-stack. Through the town the homes and business blocks were more closely grouped, and the night view added to a sense of compactness.

It was the seaward view that swept me with a

sense of breadth and beauty. The rugged cliffs mounted upwards on opposing shores toward the sky, and the islands sailed on the smooth tide. The lighthouse opened and closed its great eye with drowsy regularity. Around the Point the lights of an out-bound steamer gave the only sign of life and motion. The scattered lamps of a far distant sailing fleet hung as apparently motionless as the stars above them. So much did the sea seem a part of the sky that my eyes swept upward to the stars.

"Ay, I don't wonder you look up," said the captain, bluffly. "'When I consider thy heavens the work of thy fingers, what is man?' Eh, doctor?"

"That's my own question," I answered, after hesitation. "Here we are, two of us, such as we are, thankful for life and such scenes as this. And there's the factory, down the 'Acre,' with another class of creatures. As to that, what is man,—any one of us? But"——

He laughed, shrewdly guessing my thought. "There's a mighty difference, isn't there, doctor? Interested in 'em, are you? You cruise about with the minister, I see. Didn't you see enough mud in the city?"

"Shepard has the interest," I replied, hastily ; "I've no fancy for mud here or elsewhere. Ordinarily I have as little as possible to do with it. But I am idle now, or was until Shepard took possession of me ; and I confess I should like to know more about the sort of life you have here."

"Well, sir, come down now, and let somebody else talk. You'll find talkers enough, and when they get through, if you want any more information come to me. I'll talk then till the moon sets! Captain Stevens, Doctor Dee of New York. Tell him about sardines, will ye, while I help the women."

"Doctor Dee? I'm glad to meet you. Glorious view on the hill, isn't it? Yes, I'm a sardine manufacturer," he said, answering my inquiry. "What do you want to know?"

"All about it," I replied ; and when he had rehearsed the interesting points of the history of the industry, and the statistics of the last year's pack, I opened the chief subject of my interest with the question: "Who are the employees? From what people, I mean, has this industry drawn as it has developed?"

"Oh, more than sixty per cent. of the help employed here now came from out of town, and

more than half of those are from the Provinces. There are some French, some Armenians, as you probably noticed. There are some good families, some riffraff. When cotton mills and shoeshops in the nearer cities close it sends a raft here. Our own people of the farms near by have come to the shops more or less. I'm sorry. They neglect the land, and the novelty of the life makes it bad for farmers' children. The trouble with the whole business," he exclaimed, "is its effect upon character. We don't make it so. But how can we make it otherwise?"

"Now this is just what I want to learn," I said, with an idea that a definite source of reliable opinion had been found; "I want to know what a factory owner thinks. Is it the business or the people that makes possible the 'Devil's Acre,' and a dozen or more of grog-shops, and winter poverty in this glorious country and wholesome climate?"

"Well,"—he paused, thoughtfully—"it is both. The work is irregular. The wages are good; not as they were ten years ago, but any family can earn enough in a good season. But it's the old story of nature from the red squirrel to the Indian,—soon got, soon gone. Why, there's Sam

Tophet," he exclaimed, warming with the subject; "he was a fast sealer. My cashier paid him, several seasons ago, an average of forty dollars every Saturday night—more than any one earns now. If he came back by Monday noon it was a sure sign that his money was gone. And when winter came he shipped for sea without a reefer or a sou'wester.

"The boys and girls who cut fish—well, they're children. If their parents did n't spend their money for them of course they would spend it, because they are children. And some are bred in bad company and apt to grow to weeds.

"There is not much winter work in this town. Men are out of the habit of winter working. They earn so much in summer that they won't work for low wages in winter. It's astonishing! They put up with misery and cold, and whistle in their shanties, and think about the next season when it'll be warm and there'll be plenty of money. The church and the business men helped families one winter who had earned twenty to forty dollars a week the summer before. That was when the business was better than now, too. But it's of no use. I can't do what I'd like, and some owners don't care.

We run the business; we pay wages. Mind, there are good families, economical souls, saving their wages and doing well. How can we lug the rest?"

"That's a good point," I said with a sense of satisfaction. "You can't do it all. I notice some of the help here to-night. That shows a friendly feeling."

He stared. "Here? To-night?" He laughed, softly. "Those are 'our own folks' as we call them, as good as any in the town, only poor. Yes, they are here. It is n't money that makes a difference here. It's blood, man, it's blood! These folks are all right."

"But how is it," I asked somewhat bluntly, with a strange light breaking upon me, "that they do n't become as bad as any others?"

"Bless you, there's better stuff in them. Besides, they're not limited to bad company. As long as they behave themselves and do credit to their families they can go with the best. That keeps them in line. If they did n't toe the mark, —well, they might slip out. But"——

A bevy of laughing girls swept us down to the veranda for the music and charades, and as the gay moments sped by, the sense of freedom and

beauty brought by the social mingling in the broad out-of-doors under the great dome of the starlit sky brought an exhilaration that seemed more spiritual than the ordinary intoxication of brain and blood in social gayeties of the city. It was to me, accustomed to systematic functions both in profession and recreation, the opening of a new paradise.

When I found myself beside Mrs. Gray, introduced by one of the social scene-shifters, and we sat where the factory lights flung their twinkle from below, I recalled my recent and unfinished conversation with Captain Stevens, and revived the topic. Mrs. Gray proved to be one of those guileless souls who, whether from much knowledge of humanity or little, seemed to welcome creation into the spacious apartments of her heart. Indeed, she reminded me of a remark of Nat Murray, relating to an aged and well-known deacon of a neighboring town. "The Lord could use him in the church, mebbe, but as fur as town office was concerned, the devil could cheat him and the town too. It never occurred to Deacon Abbott that it was possible fur a man to lie."

I sounded her cheery and sympathetic soul,

and she regaled me with delightful stories of children who sometimes thronged at her home from certain families of the factory workers, and pleasant and agreeable accounts of sundry personages of her acquaintance who worked in the odor of oil and fish. But she turned with grief to the lamentable conditions that were as hopeless to her as to me,—with this difference, that she sympathized and I did not, save for an uneasy feeling that there might be a weakness in Captain Stevens' argument that the native race was born of better stuff, and native character was kept pure by contact with good society.

A portly son of Echo Bluffs, revisiting after long absence, joined us.

"Now see here," said he, puffing his cigar with easy self-assurance, "I was born here, you know. Maine's a good place to be born in. It's a good place to get away from, as early as you can,—the sooner the better, and keep away from your hailing port. It was all very well here when I was a boy, when men owned their farms and their vessels. But this sardine business has killed all my respect for the community. I would n't put my foot in one of those buildings. Why, I should carry the smell to Philadelphia!

I only wonder that the inhabitants are n't born with turned-up noses."

Whether it was the look of discomfort called to Mrs. Gray's face by the waft of tobacco smoke as he turned away, or the no less despicable odor of gross disloyalty to his native state, I found myself in closer sympathy with her.

"For all that," she said with gentle, quiet dignity as the heavy form disappeared, "a man is a man,—and a brute is a brute. I've no doubt there are factory girls here too good for him. If we knew them better we might appreciate them more. When I think of Grant Hamilton I ask, Can we expect the boys of the sardine shops to do better than he?

"Do n't you suppose, sir," she said, laying her hand upon my arm, "that there are many girls who came from Christian homes and boys who haven't forgotten their baby prayers? I can't go to the factories. I do n't know what I can do except with my neighbors and their children who come to me. But they tell me things that make me sad. What are we doing? Are our people really better than they? Where is Grace Sawyer? She came from one of the best of homes. A wife's company is no match for bad

companions if a man keeps among them day and night. She found it was so; and it killed her. Look at Grant Hamilton, I say!"

"Hamilton? Hamilton?" I repeated, with a dim recollection of a name heard about town, and the impression of a face, "who is he?"

"Grant Hamilton? He was one of the best boys in the town. His father was Captain James Hamilton. Grant had a good home, and I used to think his parents governed him just right. They were proud of him when he came back from college, all ready to do business in Echo Bluffs, and we were glad there was one smart boy willing to stay in his own town. Then he found one of the best of wives. Have you seen her? Look!"

She pointed towards a group of lively talkers surrounding a woman whose fine features and natural dignity lent remarkable grace to a girlish vivacity that possessed her in conversation. Yet in a moment of repose her features wore a maturer expression as of experience or sorrow. In the hum of other voices and surrounding laughter the conversation was indistinct. I watched the play of her features. They were easy to read.

Life and death combine to make many such features in social life. But her countenance was not a social mask. There was more evidence of nobility of soul struggling with disaster than of sorrow clinging to gayety.

“Ah,” said I, “what happened?”

“Drink! Except his cousin he was our smartest business man. He was generous, too. When three of the factories burned he might have bought the lots and controlled the business. But he loaned money to the owners and helped them start new factories. He was proud of his family. He would help the poor; but as for their souls—he laughed when I talked with him about the saloons. ‘Ah, Mother Gray,’ he said, ‘we’ll take care of ourselves. We’ve enough to do in that.’ Now the saloons have him!”

“Oh, I recollect,” I said; “he’s the man of whom Shepard spoke, who took medical treatment last winter for his liquor habit. Takes it for granted he is cured and is doing well, I understand.”

She sighed. “I hope so; but I do n’t know. He always picked his company. But he picked for gayety and pleasure and business. If he had helped make better men and women, their society

might help him now. Who are his comrades to-night? Where is he? His wife does n't know. She hopes he will come home sober as he has for five months. But she may go home and wait for him till morning, as she has done many times in the past.

"I knew the druggist, Jerry Phail, in Highton," she continued; "I begged Grant not to rent his store to him. 'I'm afraid of him, Mr. Hamilton,' I said; 'he'll be no help to the town.' He laughed; I remember just what he said: 'Business is business, Mother Gray.' He would n't oppose the saloons; now the saloons have him."

There were movements on the veranda and conversation ceased. We heard the sound of the piano where it stood by the open bay-window. A young soprano stood under the lighted awning and brightened a half-hour with popular songs. But I confess to a feeling of disappointment when her voice, which was merry with a touch of brilliancy, attempted some of the classics and presented "The Bridge," with a vivid lightness that made impossible any conception of the great power and pathos of the author's words:

“ For my heart was hot and restless
And my life was full of care,
And the burden laid upon me
Seemed greater than I could bear.

* * * * *

“ As long as the heart has passions,
As long as life has woes.”

Nevertheless as an addition to my new studies of human nature I sought an introduction to the singer, after the songs. I blazed a path to the subjects of my chief interest until we reached a point where we could leap from music to music lovers, and I had just remarked that there were not many young men in the assembly.

“ Our best young men migrate,” she said with a smile.

“ Are these girls natives of the town ? ”

“ Nearly all. There are a few from other towns. There is a group of Highton girls. Miss Snell is also from Highton.”

“ Aren’t there some of your own class among the incomers ? ” I asked. “ Down among the sardine workers I notice some who seem very well bred. I’ve heard some names,—Mollie Brett, Susie Wentworth, Jennie Kent, Ethel Cole, and—Nan Rhodes.”

“ Ah, yes. We do n’t know many of them.

They have their own associates, I presume. They usually get the kind of boarding-places they are adapted to, and pretty good company if they wish, and they are always welcome at church. We do n't know them well enough to associate much. Of course we're interested in them."

"One of them is a singer—has had some training, I fancy."

"Nan Rhodes? Yes, I know. I believe she has quite a vocal reputation among the sardiners, though I haven't heard her. Father was quite interested in her when she came. Anna Rhodes is her name. We knew she came from some of the Nova Scotia families, and there was something good about her, you know. But she wouldn't talk of herself or about her family. We understood they were good people, and all that, who were living in Annapolis Valley. But she did n't choose the best companions. Of course we did not care enough to write for information. She brought a church letter from somewhere in the States, and joined our church. But she became so free with her factory associates we were a little afraid. I haven't seen her this summer,—unless, perhaps, at church. I believe she is still in town."

I could only answer as I looked down across the terrace of streets to the 'Acre,' with a growing sense of the gulf between:—"Yes, she is here."

When the half moon had set and the candles in the Japanese lanterns had burned to the socket and the cheery sounds began to diminish, I said good-night and strolled off alone. I turned down the hill and through the 'Acre,' with revolving thoughts—smiling sometimes at the gayety, sometimes burning with interest in the novelty, and sometimes half-disgusted that a down-east town should excite anything deeper than curiosity and amusement in the mind of one accustomed to view a larger variety stage with indifference.

The factory lights had dwindled to the watchman's lantern. Here and there men and women, glad to breathe fresh night air in exchange for the heat and gas of the factories, were stretched on the green roadside, in the thin garb of the day, recklessly or thoughtlessly indifferent to chill or dampness.

I passed the gap between the 'Acre' and the stores. As the light of Phail's drug store was

blinding my steps in the Hollow, I nearly stumbled against a man clutching the shattered railing by the roadside. I caught a glimpse of him, writhing, just as a groan burst from his lips. He grasped my shoulder. It was Grant Hamilton.

"For God's sake, man, help me!"

I realized the scene, readily enough. The scent of liquor was about and broken glass was crackling under my feet. But he had the voice and breath of a man perfectly sober. I took the trembling, perspiring arm and without a word we moved on. Passing Phail's he gripped my arm tightly and turned his head away. We did not talk. Whatever our thoughts, neither had anything to speak. When, at last, we crossed his veranda and heard a step in the hall, he lifted himself erect with a sudden dignity of manhood, withdrew his arm, and grasped my hand warmly.

"Thank you, sir. Good-night!"

CHAPTER X

CROSS-LIGHTS OF EARTH

"The life of man consists not in seeing visions and dreaming dreams, but in active charity and willing service."—*Longfellow*.

"Nothing except a life can really help another life."—*George Eliot*.

I WAS dozing next morning in a delicious languor, having succeeded, undisturbed by the affairs of the previous evening, in getting a fine night's sleep. Past my usual breakfast hour I heard Shepard's quick step and his rousing rat-tat-tat on the door stirred my comatose mind.

"Come!" I called.

He came with alacrity, and chuckled when he saw me drowsily blinking. "Echo Bluffs is what you need, doctor," he said, mirthfully; "you'll be drowsier yet by and by. But, I say! I have a case for you down on the 'Acre.' Just what you ought to have to hold your skill."

"What is it?" I asked as cheerfully as I could with my distaste of anything that savored of old associations and responsibility.

"Widow Tuff and her family have the measles.

All, every one, none excepted, no more to follow. Uriah, Jessie Ann, Levi, Myra Ann, Harriet Ann, 'Bijah Ann, Georgie Ann, and Mother Ann herself,—worst case of all. The children have not bad cases. 'Bijah and Georgie Ann are in bed with the mother, but the others are out-of-doors and would like to be knocking all about the 'Acre.' These are the only cases in town. They took the disease before they moved in, presumably. There are a hundred families who might be thrown out of work if we have an epidemic on the rampage, with carelessness, sloppy feet, and sweats and chills in the shops and out. Of course they don't think much about it, and they think measles must come sooner or later. But what's the use? I told the boys if they would stay at home and keep the girls there I'd send them a good doctor for their mother. And "——

"But, look!" I expostulated, "aren't you a freak! If they have measles it is already scattered about, and what do measles amount to in this season? Let them raise a good crop on the 'Acre.' They'll be better next winter. Besides, I don't want to interfere in these affairs. Let the local doctors "——

"Pshaw!" burst Shepard, "the doctors will have scarcely a case of it. Let's try to finish it where it is, to save all the fuss, loss and sorrow. They may not have given it to any one. They hadn't begun work, and there is no one living near. Measles are severe enough among these careless people to get at least a dozen cases of the worst kind if it runs. Come on!"

Shepard had the logic, and it seemed rather narrow to refuse. Besides, it promised to be interesting. So after a leisurely breakfast I strolled off to the "Acre" and picked my way across the little swamp at the farther corner to the isolated camp of the Tuffs.

A familiar voice of song within was varied by a cheery whistle, and I caught the rub-rub of a wash-board accompaniment and the splash of clothes and water. I pushed open the rude door of the shed, entered unceremoniously, and stood face to face with Nan Rhodes as she lifted herself from the tub and turned toward me. I stared in dumb surprise and curiosity, with so little tact that her face turned scarlet. Then she flung back her falling hair with her driest wrist and broke into merry laughter.

"Good-morning!" she said.

"Good-morning!" said I. "Where are the patients?"

"Some on the beach, some in the bed," she replied, and led the way through the kitchen to the bedroom. The room was darkened, by her hand, I suppose, and an ingenious arrangement of a shawl at an open window supplied some ventilation. But the broiling sun fell on the roof. There was no wind. The air within was stifling. The subtle odors of measles, cabbage, onion and smoke blended together in a peculiar seent.

"Troublesome eyes, eh?" I asked.

"They're not bad, sir," replied the mother; "only the dark's a comfort, and Georgie Ann ain't so fussy. I'd have let 'Bijah get up, but he keeps her quiet—she's just a baby."

The mother groaned with some effort at suppression.

"Headache?" I asked.

"Oh, yes!"

To make a long story short, I thought there was good cause to thank the stars that the mother was in a physician's hands, and Nan and I soon arranged a hay cot for the children, and, with bandages on the eyes of the patients, we cleared and opened the windows and made a

slight draught of air. Nan returned to the wash in the shed. I sat on the doorstep.

"So the others are on the beach, you say. How are they?"

"Oh, light cases, I think. I told them to keep from the water. It seems strange, but all came down within two days. They stopped at a boarding-house in St. John the night after they packed, waiting for the morning steamer. I suppose they took it there."

I surveyed the interior of the cottage through the open doorway. It was merely a cabin, built of poles and boards, unshingled and unclapboarded. The three rooms, shed, kitchen and bedroom, were blank and bare. Overhead a scaffold served as a sleeping-loft for a part of the family. A good table was in the center of the kitchen floor—there is often some one or more articles new and attractive in such homes, showing how a desire as much as a necessity had preceded a purchase. But there was only one chair, with a missing arm, and rough plank benches. A cupboard of unplanned boards was built in one corner of the kitchen and beside it stood the staple article of cottage life—the barrel of flour.

A trunk and a sea-chest stood against the opposite wall. A line hung above them supported miscellaneous children's garments. A small, warped, cracked stove poked its rusty funnel into the blackened chimney. A miscellany of white crockery lay in a box nailed to the wall between the windows, and a bright sheet of new tin tacked on the end of the box evidently served as a mirror. The shed was furnished with drift-wood from refuse and wreckage gathered on the beach, and adorned by a few kettles, pans, a clam-hoe and basket, the wash-tub and bench, and Nan Rhodes.

"Enjoying yourself?" I asked, critically.

"Oh, it's fun!" she laughed. "Don't you know it seems good when you are well and strong to come in and help some one who is n't sick enough to be in danger, but is miserable and needy? Then you feel all your own good health and how much you can do, and you want to go right through the work and make the sick folks look pleased and ease their minds. Besides, you can get them something to eat, and sometimes that brings an appetite. Half the trouble with our sick people is that they are not fed as they ought to be in sickness. It's good to be some

body and to do something worth while." (*Rub, rub, rub.*)

"Am I supposed to visit the patients on the beach?" I inquired.

She stepped to the door and called: "U! Jess! Lev! My! Hat!" Her eyes twinkled as she glanced at me.

I laughed, immoderately. "Whose hat?"

"That's Nat Murray's joke," she replied. "They say no one ever saw a joke in those names until the family came here for their first season. Then Nat studied it out one day over the fryer. There's more of it, as you may see if you'll consider the rest of the family."

There were heads bobbing up over the bank. They were startled at sight of a stranger, and meandered slowly and shyly, the youngest dragging in the rear. They were a well assorted lot, ranging in years from fifteen down, apparently, and of all complexions and shades of hair. But the Tuff resemblance was evident; none of them bore the features of the woman who lay in the bed, except for the faint eruption of measles that adorned them all.

Nan had picked up her basket of clothes and was stringing them upon the line and along the

grass. Her snatches of whistle and song seemed to reassure the timid youngsters and maidens, who crept up to her, eying me.

"Is the tide up, Lev?" asked Nan.

"Yes, sir," the boy replied, staring at me.

"Get your fife and make the wind blow, won't you?" she continued in a matter-of-fact way. The boy's eyes changed, and his heels disappeared past me into the cabin. When he came out I adopted Nan's manner of introduction, and as he stepped past me I checked him with: "What's the fife made of?"

"It's wooden, sir," he said, and thrust it out toward me.

I nodded. "Go on."

He perched on a log, facing Nan and the sea, and began a variation of weird noises, from the sougling of the breeze in the pines to the shrill whistle of the southeast wind through the rigging of a vessel. The peculiar note of the draught in the chimney and the crescendo and diminuendo in the trees were strikingly real. Uriah perched on the chopping-block. Nan was seated on the grassy turf, the girls gathered about her. When the extemporizations of music ceased she clapped her hands.

"Bravo, Lev!" she cried. "Now let's sing. What shall we sing, Myra?"

"'Bamy Coon," was the prompt reply.

"Good!" replied Nan with a twinkle. "But we know a better one, don't we? Let's try 'God Knows.'"

Little Hattie clapped her hands, and Levi fingered his flute restlessly. Uriah and I performed the part of spectators, but the rest united in the song, Levi as chief musician, the children imitating Nan's motions with a skill that would have been of credit to a kindergarten class. Surroundings and conditions considered, the song was like a flower blooming above the city pavement, but the children's faces took on a new and finer expression, and I confess there seemed to be a change in the atmosphere.



1. "Know-est thou how ma-ny star-eyes In the
2. "Know-est thou how ma-ny in-sects In the
3. "Know-est thou how ma-ny chil-dren Sleep in



az - ure heavens glow? Knowest thou how ma-ny
sun-shine dance all day? Knowest thou how ma-ny
ti - ny beds at night, With-out care or tho't of



cloudlets Float a - bove us to and fro? God the
fish - es In the spark - ling wa - ter play? God the
sor - row, Wake a - gain with morn - ing light? God who



Lord their number knoweth, For each one His care He
Lord who dwells in Heaven Name and life to each has
has them in His keep - ing Watches o - ver them while



show - eth, Should they wan - der He will
giv - en, Bade them all be glad and
sleep - ing, Finds them pre - cious in His



know, Should they wan - der He will know.
gay, Bade them all be glad and gay.
sight, Finds them pre - cious in His sight."

"Now pick up chips for the dinner fire and talk with the doctor," and Nan returned to her tub and nursing. For amusement's sake I set myself catechizing the group on sundry unimportant themes, the measles very evidently demanding no attention in these young patients beyond Nan's care and oversight. The young musician had relapsed into silence, but Uriah was thawing, and his isolation in Shepard's imposed quarantine

evidently made him lonely. He was literally bursting with information.

"Gee, yes, I know lots of 'em," he responded to the query if he knew any of the boys. "This ain't the first time we've lived here. Jim Tucker 'n' me used ter have great times. But Jim ain't here now," he said regretfully. "I dunno but they laughed him out."

"How?"

"Oh, Jim was too smart. He and Grub Todd watered the men at the 'Scrimmage' last summer. Jim sneaked about ahead of Grub one day and peddled out a lot of ginger-water, and promised the men he'd bring more if they'd give him the trade. By-me-by when he had it all, and Grub could n't sell plain water, Jim began to leave out the ginger on washin' days, and tell the men he could n't git it, 'cause his mother was washin'. Gee! They begun to think she washed pretty often. By-me-by, one day,—you know Sam Hall? They call him 'Football.' He's a windy feller, an' allus kickin'—works in the 'Butt'nut' now—little feller with sneaky eyes and a big mouth that hangs loose at one corner where a little ter-backer juice runs out. Wal, Football saw Jim

comin' in one day an' he sung out: 'Is your marm washin' in ginger-water to-day?' Then the other fellers took it up, an' ev'ry time Jim came 'round they said, 'Here's Jim Tucker! His marm's washin' in ginger-water to-day!' Then Jim quit an' went over ter the 'Resurrection,' but they'd caught on there. He run away ter sea last fall. I guess he got sick o' hearin' about ginger-water.

"There's Roy Johnson, goin' in swimmin'," he said with a sigh, shading his eyes and staring out to the Point. "I wish I could go. I hain't seen Roy this year ter talk. He's littler'n I be, and I dunno's he can talk plain yet, but we had lots of fun when we cut fish at the 'Salt-Box.' Roy got ketched in the shaft one day, an' it snaked the clo'es offen him. It stripped him clean bare, an' dropped him down on the floor, ker-wump! My, wa'n't I scared! But his father was scarer. He was picklin', an' he jest run an' picked Roy up, an' hugged him up to his salty apron. Roy was bare-naked an' pretty well scraped, an' of course the salt an' the huggin' made his skin smart. He yelled like blue murder. I guess his father thought he was killed. He laid him down on the sawdust in the labelin'-

shed ; an' when Roy stopped yellin' an' opened his eyes he grabbed him up again, an' Roy yelled louder 'n ever. His dad run clean over to his house with him, an' him yellin' like the 'Butt'nut's' whistle. By the time he got him dropped on the bed 'Patty' Cobb,—you know Oscar Cobb? He's jest like a little snail-shell, all smooth an' round an' pretty, with a bald, shiny head, an' brown, shiny eyes, an' little feet, an' good clo'es, an' he likes ter be called Mr. Cobb. But the boys call him 'Patty.' He likes ter tell everybody that's sick what's the matter with 'em. He was lookin' at Roy when he lay squealin' on the bed, an' rubbin' off the salt. By-me-by when Roy opened his eyes his father was cryin', an' I s'pose the ole man wanted ter know if Roy had his senses, an' he says, 'Who's this come ter see yer, Roy? Can't ye tell?' Roy looked up rather mad an' said, 'Him? That's Patty Cobb!' I guess Patty thought he was all right then. Anyway, he did n't stop to see.

"Ebbie Scranton an' me use' ter play the Owl tergether," he went on, reminiscently. "Eb was a gen'rous feller. You've seen his grandmother, I s'pose. Prob'ly she packs fish at the 'Resur-

rection, now. She's a big woman, with a voice bigger 'n she is, an' scraggy teeth that look as if they'd been built ter be outside of her mouth. She use' ter tell fortunes, an' if any of the little fellers was carryin' fish she'd sing out, 'Fish here, fish here! If yer don't bring me some fish I'll throw a cuss on ye!' Wal, Eb,—did n't yer never seen Eb? He's a little squizeden chap, with teeth stickin' out like a squirrel's. He was hurt once, an' his gran' would n't let him work, but he liked ter squabble. When he got squabblin' with the boys she'd call out, 'Now hold on, Ebby, you know you ain't sound.' 'Wal, by Jimp, granny, if you do n't gimme ten cents ter play the Owl I'll squabble all day.' 'Wal, take it, take it; here, come git it; you ain't like other boys, you know you ain't.' Then Eb 'ud wink at me an' we'd go off an' divide an' play the Owl. Say, doctor," he asked anxiously, "is Eb about here yet?"

"I do n't know him," I replied.

"Oh, wal, you look an' see, won't yer? Marm do n't let me play the Owl, an' I have ter wait till Eb gits some money outen his granny. You look fer a little feller with red hair an' them teeth I told ye about, an' a flat forehead, an' his

ears built out. Eb do n't button his shirt, an' it 's allus flappin'. Mostly he has blue overalls on, an' likely one of 'em 's rolled up to his knee, an' the other one's ripped, an' flappin' 'cause it won't stay up. He do n't work much, but if he's been carryin' flakes he'll have black grease smooched under his chin. My, he got twenty-five cents outen his granny one day! She heard him swearin' an' bought him off. He did n't stay bought. I guess not! Eb's queer, he is. Smut White use'ter say he had the blind staggers—use'ter sling salt on him. But once Eb caught Smut comin' up from 'down below,' an' jest as he got his head through, Eb tipped up a bag of salt an' yanked it down over Smut's head. Smut tumbled down the ladder into the fish-baskets. Eb looked down after him an' sung out, 'Got the blind staggers, Smutty?' "

"Smart boy," I commented.

"I tell ye the's smart folks in the factories, doctor," said Uriah proudly. "Do you know Foxy Watts? He's a little man, with a narrer head an' his eyebrows hooked down, an' slick hair, an' another eyebrow on his upper lip, like merlasses runnin' down. He was boss at the 'Salt-Box' when the 'spection law was passed,

an' the 'spectors use' ter come 'round ter look at the vinegar an' mustard, an' the fish, an' everything else. They use' ter mix the mustard with salt water instid o' vinegar at the 'Salt-Box'—had a pipe run down an' pumped it outen the sea. One day the 'spector hove in sight when there wa'n't a barrel o' vinegar in the shop. Foxy rattled the chain tackle down into the hole an' yelled, 'Send up another barrel o' vinegar!' Foxy's boy was down there, an' he knew somethin' was up. So he hooked onto a barrel of acid, what the sealers an' can-makers use, yer know, an' sent it up. But it took Foxy so long ter find his bung-knocker that the 'spector never tasted that vinegar! An' the packers wa'n't workin' yet that mornin', an' every can was sealed tight, so he could n't tell but what they was usin' vinegar right along. Gee! When I'm a man!"——

Nan was calling emphatically for the stove-wood, and Uriah rose regretfully to assist the younger chip-gatherers. I visited the bed patients again, and after final instructions and assurances departed for a stroll and a reverie.

CHAPTER XI

SCENES AT THE "SALT-BOX"

"Go down to the 'Salt-Box'—take a peek in,
And there you 'll see Davieson cutting plain tin.
His nose is so lo-o-ong, and his eyes are so dim!
But still he 's a scooter at cutting plain tin."

—*A Ballad of Echo Bluffs.*

OF the few or many who may be watching the homespun thread of this tale, there will be a group who may discern nothing but the shadows of life in the industry that transforms infantile herring into a case of sardines. It would be unreal and less true to the purpose of its transcription if it failed to bring into its atmosphere the brightness and the breeze of life and labor. Consequently, many of the characters to whom you are introduced may not be necessary to the detailed events that formed the singular experience of that summer and gave birth to this story; but the variety is essential to a clear vision of life in this unique industry on the shores of Maine.

Let me illuminate by some diversions of an-

other day, on which I was idling about the factories.

"Dumb" Davieson, tin-cutter at the "Salt-Box," tramped the foot-lever of his machine in silent oblivion of all but the fact that he could stamp out five dollars per day. It may be a fondness for cheese—Nat Murray said he had a mouth built for cheese, and it was usually "pooched" with it,—had bred his taciturnity. However, it is the quiet man watching from his eye-corners and keeping thoughts and opinions to himself amid the rattle of tongues, who wins a measure of respect from his vicinity, whether among can-makers, stock-jobbers, or in the medical profession.

At the "Salt-Box," for lack of other accommodations, "Lonely" Pike's seaming-table was adjacent to the tin-cutter's, and Pike sat next Davieson's machine. Lonely Pike,—tall, slim, with great hands and feet that protruded from scant clothes (hung, as Captain Sinnett declared, "like a shirt on a handspike,")—was fond of the sound of conversation, but lacked conversational powers. A tremulous diffidence obscured him. One thing positive about him, bred by habit, was that he could seam and make

good money. One thing more—hidden but real—he had a scorn of meanness. Another, also: he liked Dumb Davieson's "opinions."

Smut White found it easier to "steal" rims from Lonely's table than to get a supply from the bin across the floor; easier still, since Lonely took it with pathetic silence, apparently without resentment, and replenished his own supply daily, adding a double quantity as Smut's visits became habitual.

Dumb Davieson watched the incident from the corner of his eye one day with a contemptuous grunt. Lonely leaned back uneasily.

"What 'ud you do about it, Dumby?"

Dumb opened his mouth reluctantly. "It's my opinion I'd punch him."

"I don't know,—I don't want to hurt him," quavered Lonely; but his jaw tightened.

A half-hour later when Smut edged around the table and reached with a genial smile for his booty, Lonely's long arm and hot copper shot across the pile and Smut, with a howl and a branded forehead, was flung back into the cabin, and thrashed with cut fingers among the sharp-edged cans.

Dumb Davieson swallowed his cheese. "Well done, Lonely!"

Lonely bent over his work with a grateful smile.

Tom Horton saw the thrust. "Just watch, now," he whispered to me with a confidential air. "That's sure to set off the crowd. Something'll happen before night."

Something frequently happens in a sardine factory. But a contagion possessed the "Salt-Box" that day. A merry imp of humor had evidently designed to brighten the seamy side of labor.

It passed to the cutting-shed where Hube Carson was washing out, and Ted Cook, fish-cutter, a tiny sprig of ten years, dressed in an inverted sawdust bag with head and arms protruding through slits, was ambushed behind a tub of brine and fish, clodding Hube with herring. Hube's leisurely smile was stirring his good-natured face as he stepped backward towards the tub. Ted's head appeared above it cautiously. With a flash Hube's long net was swung over the boy, and all that was visible was a pair of upturned, flying feet, beating the air above the pickle-tub, brine and scales and gurry

flying into the faces of a half-dozen would-be rescuers.

"Has he pickled enough, boys?" drawled Hube. With a dexterous thrust of his net he flung him out to the floor, blue-lipped and choking, salt and scales matted in his hair and his sack-cloth drabbled in brine.

In the packing-room "Lady Macbeth" worked at the table next an oil-tank. Black-eyed, white-haired, leathery and witch-like, the girls by long habit gave way when she pressed toward the oiler to replenish her supply. One girl resentfully pushed her aside. Lady's grand-daughter, Jessie Carle, sprang in, her eyes flashing.

"Shame on you, pushing my old grandmother!" she cried.

"Shame on yourself!" was the retort. "Why do n't you earn enough to keep your old grandmother at home?"

They scrapped. There was a howl of pleasure from the sealing-room, and the foreman, with a broad smile, disappeared behind the dryer. When hair, disordered and tangled, fell over the combatants' eyes and blinded them in the scrimmage, Jessie seized a ladle of oil and with a quick motion flung it, trickling and cold, down

her assailant's back. A shout of delight came from the sealers.

The plot of the unseen imp of humor deepened. Fanny Brent, otherwise known as "Mity," for her diminutive stature, had pushed through the knot of girls and climbed to a table beyond the oil-tank, leaning over it for a full view. Mity was enthusiastic. At the dénouement she danced with glee, but on the treacherous foothold of the oily table she lost her equilibrium. The dive to the depths of the oil-tank was dramatic. The rescue was comic. Dragged out from the adhesive fluid by an excited sealer and drained, head downward, she ceased to be "Mity." A new name,—*"Greaseball,"*—came with the unique baptism, to be carried, no doubt, to the end of her factory career.

But the imp of humor became almost a fiend at the last scene of the afternoon. Tom Horton, intent on watching the rescue of Mity, hung a bucket of mustard on the faucet of another oil-tank. Perley, the foreman, reappeared as the spectators of Greaseball's baptism were returning to their work. He caught sight of the bucket with its heavy weight of mustard hanging on the faucet, and came up in haste.

"Hey, look out!" he cried. "Take it off! You'll break that faucet!"

His heavy tread shook the floor as he sprang towards the tank. Tom stared with feigned obtuseness. The mustard bucket jarred and fell. It struck the floor at Perley's feet. The contents, like a volcano's burst, flew upward and the spicy deluge was flung into his eyes. He leaped backward with smarting pain and fell upon the packing-table. Spluttering and spewing he staggered to his feet, clawing mustard from his eyes and spitting it from his lips. A vigorous rub of the sleeve only wormed it deeper into the sensitive skin.

"Water!" he roared. Tom caught up a fire-pail and flung its contents over him. Gasping and groaning with the sting of the mustard and the discomfort of the sudden drenching he dropped to the floor. Smothering my smiles under a sympathetic countenance, I called for warm water to be brought from the fire-room, and proceeded to play the good physician for his relief.

CHAPTER XII

A FEW OF THE MANY

"Life is to be fortified by many friendships."—*Sidney Smith.*

"God has not given us vast wisdom to solve all the problems or unfailing wisdom to direct all the wanderings of our brothers' lives. But he has given to every one of us the power to be spiritual, and by our spirituality to lift and enlarge and enlighten the lives we touch."—*Phillips Brooks.*

I SHALL linger now to talk not simply of human life but of human nature and human beings. It may be a long chapter, tedious to you, perhaps,—of the sort I did not like before those days at Echo Bluffs. Study it well. Dream over it, if you like. Of the many we have met and shall meet, those that pass before us in this chapter are the chief characters of this Eastern miracle-play, and you may wish to bear that in mind.

Whatever lines of caste, necessary or unnecessary, might be drawn by some in life on the sardine coast, there was still a freedom of acquaintance similar to the ready speech and easy manners of the West. It reached its cleverest

abandon among the factories. Cottonseed oil may serve as a lubricant of human nature; or as one touch of nature makes the whole world kin, so a grease-spot makes all the factory a family.

Taking this by itself, apart from all ills that might follow indiscriminate associations, I found it cheery. Never a hail-fellow-well-met, I found the atmosphere relaxing. It was life in a state of nature in this sense, that every life seemed following its natural bent. The result was a marvelous diversity. There is no typical sardine worker. They are as varied as all the sizes of herring that might be packed as sardines.

These diverse streams of human life flow and intermingle in a common tide. Some never lose their identity. Some speed with the current, some surge against it; the majority drift, or whirl in the pool. You might watch them as I have watched the eddy off Scraggy Point on a hazy summer afternoon, and they might seem, like the eddy, a careless, endless, meaningless fantasy of nature; or, like a kaleidoscope, a constant shifting of the same several colors. It is fortunate, perhaps (there is so much we cannot remedy), that we are not conscious of all evil.

But so much of it is evidently a part of the process of nature that it is sometimes too easy to be indifferent. In the midst of the half-gay unconcern of life it requires the index finger of a deeper acquaintance to note that some go down, in want, or failure, or evil.

As acquaintance quickened and deepened, the drama of real life at Echo Bluffs spread out its more vivid scenes and I caught the drift of the play. I watched Grant Hamilton's gait with a sense of satisfaction as I saw its growing sprightliness and steadiness. His recent medical cure was his reliance, but, knowing its limitations and remembering the vivid experience of my return from Captain Sinnett's evening party, I depended more on the trace of a once fine manhood that was more and more discernible in him. A wife's power may not amount to much in such cases, but Mrs. Hamilton had at least been able to take care of the hulk and keep it from utter wreckage; and now she threw all her energy into making the home bright and cheery. There was something majestic in the poise with which she bore those days of uncertainty and hope. In the acquaintance that grew between us, in which I shared the sacred secrets of her sorrows, there

came a reverence for that womanhood whose finest name is devotion.

"He'll win, won't he?" I asked Shepard one day.

He shook his head sadly. "No, not without God's help," was his blunt reply.

I remember I laughed somewhat scornfully.

"He needs a new atmosphere," Shepard explained. "Away from old acquaintance and the stench of temptation he might fight it out. But he can't stay on his new level here unless he meets God and holds to him with a fast grip, and breathes a new air."

It was a difficult situation. The utter disregard of the liquor law amazed me, though I had lived in an atmosphere of lawlessness and legalized corruption. Schemes and snares for trapping the unwary, pitfalls for the boys, and traps for the half-reformed were spread everywhere. Jerry Phail's audacity and utter callousness appalled me. I wondered whether he drove his liquor trade in careless thoughtlessness or was a fiend in the garb of good-humor.

"Oh, he's a good fellow, Jerry is. 'Minds me of a certain Bible character," said Nat Murray, one day. "Fact," he continued calmly

in response to my look of disgust. "All he needs is horns and a tail!"

We did not see much of Guy Wilson. What prevented me from rehearsing to Shepard that night scene on the beach I do not know, unless it was my natural distaste for conversation that touched subjects of a religious nature, and a reluctance to confessing an interest in humanity; although I appreciated Wilson's manly resistance to Phail's temptation. Guy drove his work energetically and resolutely at the sealing-table, and as resolutely walked to his lodgings at night or when the pack of the day was sealed. Once, while on a sunrise stroll, I saw him rowing on the bay, apparently taking leisurely enjoyment. There was some significance in his attendance at church, where he was easily discovered in the back corner group.

One thing more I noted in factory observation, and with less pleasure. Guy watched Nan Rhodes. His eyes wandered frequently through the door of the sealing-room down the line of packers' tables and sought her. I had not seen them together since the Fourth, in spite of the common acquaintance of sexes among the factories. Once, when she passed him on the way to her table and

he looked up wistfully, I saw her throw a swift answering smile. He bent over his work with redoubled energy.

George Salter was a standing problem. I usually turn from such characters with disgust. Any will power that seemed possibly to exist was flung to the wind, with all evidence of interest in manhood or decency. Yet there was something impossible to describe that spoke of a motherhood that had stamped itself upon him, either pre-natally or before the rubbish of passing years could mar its tracings in his voice and manner. When he drank he drank as one who neither felt temptation nor resisted it. When he kept sober it was evidently the result of the unconcealed affection of Margaret Dixon, who was as much better than he as salt than sand, but with no more of resolution or will power.

You know there are girls of a certain type and temperament who are like the wax in my artist friend's studio, which, for a model, he moulds to-day into a face that almost breathes with soul-life, and to-morrow with an easy touch reshapes into restless or reckless features, and again, on another day fashions into a heroic or matronly face. Such are the girls who respond to whatever *



GUY BENT OVER HIS WORK WITH REDOUBLED ENERGY.

influence may be nearest or strongest, and are shaped again into an opposite form by the next finger that touches them. Moulded and remoulded in the pliable days of girlhood and youth, it remains to be seen whether the last influence shall leave them a misshapen and earth-soiled waxen mass, or whether some friendship shall fashion them into nobility and transmit to them the power of permanency. There are others, apparently of the same irresolute and mobile type, but who have within themselves a double nature that may yield idly or resist powerfully. Of the first named class was Margaret Dixon; of the latter, Jennie Kent.

John Hunt, widely distinct from any of these, born as lowly as Abraham Lincoln, and with neither influences nor circumstances to serve as pole-star or guide, had a manly self-consciousness that seemed to be groping for something better than surrounding conditions or associations. He was a boy hard to approach; so self-reliant, apparently, that he did not command sympathy nor manifest a need of friendship. Such boys often lose the help needed, I presume. But while any influences that might be ordained for the improvement of George Salter seemed to me certain of

failure, and the future of Margaret Dixon and Jennie Kent so uncertain, I thought of John Hunt with an instinctive idea that the right forces would ultimately combine to aid him. I can only explain that feeling as the natural instinct of a mind imbued with the sentiment, "Where there's a will there's a way,"—and whatever that way might be or however it might open, I felt that John Hunt would find it.

Three other boys, just turning to manhood, were fast linking me to themselves by a chain of comradeship. A tie seemed also to bind them together—utterly dissimilar natures, too. Tom Horton was a bright, talkative, ambitious, uneasy fellow, with a disposition as restless as his ragged red hair. He was favored with the sort of home and parents that are the one thing to prevent such a boy from self-destruction where temptations abound. It was not long since he had left school. In fact, he seemed to hover between an ambition to climb skyward and a disposition to scour the plain. Stephen Somes' home was what his mother made it—he bore the stamp of good parentage. His eye was clear, quiet and self-possessed, and his high forehead and neat, curling black hair lent an air of intellectual vigor and

moral self-control. Oddly enough these were the traits he apparently lacked. There were indications that weeds of indolence were springing up over his birthright. Youngest of the three, Joe Arthur sprang from a home where misfortune had followed misfortune, and hopeless shiftlessness had succeeded vigor and energy—so the story was told; and the boy's apparent lack of energy and ambition indicated the early blight that had fallen upon his parents' lives. Yet, with the strange perversity with which Nature molds her characters—something for which we should be grateful, I suppose—there was a moral honesty and squareness about him. If he had no ideal ambitions he certainly had no taint of evil. I would have expected some outbreak of deviltry from Tom Horton's ingenuity sooner than from Joe Arthur's breeding.

These boys lived in the precious hours of youth, as dissimilar by nature as boys are made, but each apparently bound to be what the strong pressure of the community's influences might make him. To me it seemed a kind of fate, fascinating to watch, dreadful if one is nervously sympathetic, as I was not. My lack of occupation and doubtless the compulsion of Shepard's

influence increased at least my dissatisfaction with the local fates, and created the same desire to alter conditions that had sometimes rushed over me in contact with city corruptions. But I could see for the boys only such hope as lay in a gospel of common sense and something to do better than useless or vicious pleasure. Shepard agreed, of course; I sometimes wondered if in truth he did not take more pride in his bowling-alley and factory service and circulated literature than in his regular church routine. But he stuck fast to this :

“Marshall, here is what it amounts to : No boy or man knows or cares enough to make himself what he ought to be. Self-interest cheats itself. Neither will he do it for others. Men do n't reform because their wives love them, and boys do n't often make fine men because the world needs them. When a thing is well done it is done for God's sake and by his influence and help. I could back it by Scripture if you did n't dread it.”

This had always seemed a dim truth, not manifested largely in the lives of my acquaintance, who were, according to my careless observation, good or bad conformably to the fiat of twin devils,

or angels, whatever the case, of heredity and environment. But when I saw the religion of manly devotion to God and God's purposes instilled into some lives by Shepard's clear, straightforward teaching I acknowledged the results. We made a fine pair of evangelists, indeed, though in a vastly different way. I lavished a little cash for the extension of games and literature, amused open-eyed youngsters at his house by talks of travel and moralizing on subjects of health; and he found no difficulty in getting me to visit with him.

No doubt as the minister's friend I slipped informally into this social life of labor, though I could hardly be certain of that as a cause. However, it accounted for my early and increasing acquaintance with Nan Rhodes. Her frankness of speech and manner showed the easy intimacy of factory life and acquaintance, but revealed behind it a dignity and self-respecting womanhood that commanded reverence or respect. She was "Nan" to every factory acquaintance—to Shepard and many others, too. But it was a title used with as much respect as the more conventional manner of my address.

I reveled in our growing intimacy. It was

unique and a trifle amusing at first that a sardine-packer should yield an acquaintance so genuinely pleasing to finer feeling and tastes and thoughts. But it became like a broadening pathway through rustic scenes, which, rustic though they were, showed evidence of that fine art which is concealed because it is the true cultivation of nature.

We all share the disappointments and loneliness of social life. Have you ever realized,—it came to me in those days, looking backward upon my previous life,—that social life and acquaintance are vexatious and unsatisfying according to the nature of the acquaintance; and that it is not solitude that we really need when we turn in disgust from the emptiness or caprice of society, but a deeper knowledge of a few lives? Acquaintance, intimacy,—does it often become companionship? What *is* companionship?

It was difficult at first to conceal my own feeling of superiority, and my cynical notions of life were easily aroused. Her positive manner annoyed me, perhaps because mine was no less positive. But her influence on her associates compelled my respect. It was manifestly su-

perior to mine on lives of my previous acquaintance. When I marked her peculiar influence and compared the apt use of her life and gifts with my own record I began to question also, What *is* superiority?


I saw her moving among the sick with a touch that carried a healing cheer, with not a trace of gloom about her. It seemed a natural instinct of the children to slip their hands into hers. It was easy to note the importance of her life to her associates. Yet she moved among them, and to and from her work, with a quiet unconsciousness that seemed to keep her from publicity. It may be an odd description, but it was like the presence of an invisible being whose influence is felt but whose presence is unnoticed. So she lived, in the isolation of the life of the "sardiners." The discordant notes of my own irritable nature found little response from her. Nevertheless before I realized it I was drawing from her in my better moments a sympathy and a music. As our acquaintance deepened and I became familiar with her own needs, I found when I struck the chord of sympathy—not calling for sympathy but yielding it—I could play upon her heartstrings as she played upon mine. Yet in

the most serious realm of her nature there was scarcely a note of sorrow. It was as hard for her to be unhappy as for me to be glad.

There was a mystery about the girl. I became convinced that she had brought from earlier life more of culture and training than was commonly supposed. Her simplicity and directness of speech, her tastes, her personality, might be not simply a fine birthright but the fruit of a culture that had learned to adapt itself to surroundings and associates. A reserve always banished the topics that might lead to the subject of her early life or her family. Once, however, I heard her say when she bade Mrs. Shepard "Good-night," after we had spent a delightful evening at the parsonage with music and good cheer:—

"It's pleasant to come here. It seems like old times at home."

I am too fastidious to have more than a passing interest in an untrained, promising voice. There are multitudes of such. Whatever nature had done in the creation of Nan Rhodes' voice, art had fashioned it with no unskilled hand or passing touch. By what course of history had this girl, sometime, somewhere, been skilfully trained for public song? What teacher or friend had



left on her the evidence of his or her ability? What fortune or misfortune had dropped her into the whirlpool of life in a sardine-packing town?

Her voice could hardly be reduced to description. When it rollicked and caroled a gloomy thought was impossible. When it did its noblest work in religious song something that seemed to come from the singer's own nature argued away the very possibility of misfortune or sadness. One could only think of all the gladness that really is and all that may be. The odd thing about it was that she who came in contact with sorrow, and might have known an abundance of trial, had a voice that knew no sorrow. It was a voice of depth and power of soul. Yet it was not a voice that sympathized with one's sorrow, however much she might sympathize; it made one forget sorrow, as though it were not worth while. Was it because hers was one of those rare natures which gain the blessing of trial but never treasure the memory of grief or nurse the sorrow?

If she sang a stately anthem there was a tone that made one lighter-hearted. When, at the funeral of Dennis Greer's child, she sang a

somber hymn chosen by the mother, she unconsciously lifted the hymn above its own gloom, and breathed into it the music of hope and cheer,—as if she were chanting into it the refrain :—

“In spite of all this, there is heaven and God.”

One day I asked Shepard what he thought of the matter.

“I don’t think—I puzzle,” he replied bluntly. “A great many lives come here that we know nothing about. It’s not our business to know. She is one of them. I think she’s wrong in her reticence. It doesn’t hurt her influence; but it cramps her, socially. People say, ‘If she’s what she seems or what she ought to be, why is she here?’ Well,—that’s the question. I thank God for her, and say nothing. I don’t know enough to say whether she’s an uncommon girl or an angel.”

Such was the factor that disturbed my social philosophy. Shepard acknowledged that it reached beyond his. I could not perfectly define her influence nor specify its methods. Was she a part of the social life? No. Prominent in the church? No, except for the unique

prominence of faithfulness and punctuality. Her prominence was that of a single life to individual lives, unnoticed in the mass, a distinct influence to many and to me. Her special public service was in the sardiners' mission at the "Gospel Harbor." I could see how the power of her voice reached from the platform and shook the hearts of men, and refined the coarse thoughts of women and girls, and made life lighter and happier for the over-burdened. But there was something behind the voice, and her mission was not merely the mission of song.

Looking backward over that summer's experiences I can only say—and I may as well say it now—that while Shepard and I were in a measure revealing the Truth, and he was opening the Way, there was one in the midst of the people who was imparting a touch of divine Life.

CHAPTER XIII

ON THE CLIFF WALK

"To win and hold a friend we are compelled to keep ourselves at his ideal point, and in turn our love makes on him the same appeal. It is this idealizing that gives to love its mighty leverage to uplift character,—because it is a constant challenge between every two, compelling each to be at his best. 'What is the secret of your life?' asked Mrs. Browning of Charles Kingsley. He replied, 'I had a friend.'"—*W. C. Gannett*.

"Friendship . . . being of itself spiritual the soul is reformed by the habit of it."—*Montaigne*.

WE met on the cliff walk one golden-hearted afternoon. There was a light run of fish that day, and the packing was postponed till the next arrival. When Nan Rhodes thrust aside her working garb for outdoor dress and life, a transformation, not easily described, made her seem to be by nature adapted to the life of open air and sunshine. The cliff walk was her favorite retreat.

"It isn't well to live one life all of the time," she said. "I like to forget the factories when I am here. Then when I go back I remember the woods and the sea. I am glad to go back

with other thoughts in my mind. I wish I could carry them to others," she added with a wistful sigh that touched me.

"Perhaps you do," I said. "What you absorb here others may absorb from you. It seems to be easy to read thoughts and to feel human nature in such a free life as this."

She looked up with interest. "So you notice it! It is really so. Is there any place where you can see the inner side of human nature as you can in a sardine factory? About the shops you can see people for just what they are worth—sometimes, of course, a little more or less. But there's no deceit about them."

"So it appears," I replied. "Perhaps that accounts for an interest I am beginning to feel in them. They seem to respond to it, too. Yet a dozen people might be named who tell me there are good girls in the factory, but that they cannot get acquainted with them. They dare not 'mix in,' they say, for fear they may be wrong in their estimate of character and may make undesirable acquaintances. I cannot blame them."

"But it makes me angry," she cried. "People say they *think* the girls are good! Why don't they try to prove it? They don't know? And

if they don't dare to mix in or try to find out, how much do they care?"

"They often speak kindly of them," I protested. "Of course some speak of the girls as they seem; but I have never seen them treated with discourtesy. People who are really afraid to be free acquaintances receive them well at church. Isn't that your common meeting ground?"

She quelled her vexation and spoke with quiet thoughtfulness. "It is n't words that people speak that hurt. It is what they do n't speak, and the girls can't help thinking a dislike is there. So they suppose folks do n't care, even if some do. Then, for spite and bravado, you might say, they go ahead and do anything they please. A feeling of 'do n't care' on both sides does harm.

"I know how people feel towards them. Do n't you see, those who do feel kindly cannot show it because they are afraid there may be something wrong that they know nothing about? The girls feel that distrust. And no one tries to help by hunting down the stories that are told about those who come in as strangers. How folks talk about Jennie Kent! Everything that's terrible

is said of her. Nothing is done to make her better; so she goes with any one who makes pleasant company and helps her forget her loneliness. Then people look down on her—of course. It's not her fault. The fault is in the false stories told and in those who help them on. No wonder they are told; but they are false, and people do n't know it.

"Jennie came to see me last night. She's fond of music. It might be her heaven if she would make it so. She has an organ, but I don't believe she has touched it since her mother died,—just before you came. But we played and sang, and it put her in one of her quiet moods. She does n't know what is said about her. I could n't tell her—it would hurt more than help. But, after we had talked about better things and good people we know, I told her I was anxious about her acquaintance with the set she has chosen. You know she is sensitive and quick to feel distrust. She knows I am her friend; but she has n't been here long enough really to trust me. I suppose she felt as if I was suspicious of her. She looked into my eyes, and then kissed me, as if I were her sister, with a sob.

"'Good-night, Nan dear,' she said. 'Do n't for-

get that I have n't done wrong, and I'm trying to do right.' And she slipped out.

"Poor girl! She does n't know how a lot of little things are wrong and may bring her into a great wrong. She's getting 'tough,'—really! She's 'going to wrack and ruin' without knowing it."

"Isn't it the natural result of factory life?" I asked.

"No! The harm's not just what is done in the factories. It's what is n't done outside. Girls must work in the factory—just as you do among sick people. But you know what you are doing and take care not to get sick. You know what diseases are, and how to escape them, and all about good food and proper clothes. But there are girls who never saw the inside of a really nice house, or beautiful pictures, or were ever told beautiful thoughts by one who believed they could be appreciated. There are girls who do n't know that ill health is needless. They think it is awful to seem to be better than others, and all they are taught about people who live in good homes and wear better clothing and speak better language,—and perhaps are better,—is that they are rich and selfish and proud.

“There are some girls who came from good, quiet, country homes. They don’t notice how different are the people here,—it’s so new and exciting! By and by they’ve forgotten their home life, and how much finer and purer they were. But others can see how they change. It’s like handling flowers; you know when they’ve been tossed and crumpled. Isn’t there anything that can keep up the home life and home feeling? The church isn’t a house, and a sociable is only a party!

“I called at Jennie Kent’s one day in her mother’s sickness. Jennie said, ‘Mr. Shepard was here to-day. He prayed for mother’—she gave me a queer look—‘and he prayed for me!’ She was as sensitive to notice or slight then as she is now. Now her mother’s in heaven, do you suppose she’ll forget that when Mr. Shepard prayed for her mother he prayed for her?”

“Can’t Shepard get her to visit him, or his wife, at home?”

“She’s afraid of religion—that’s one thing. The other is this: it isn’t the custom of factory girls of her class who came from out of town to go to nice homes. It would seem too odd. She ought to go. But other girls would tease her

about it, even if they respected her the more. All that would bring about a change would be for some of the people to spend time getting acquainted with the factory help, and to welcome some, at least, into their homes."

"Now, Miss Rhodes," I cried, "do n't preach it! You would n't do it yourself. You do n't make an asylum or a public house of your own home. I have n't been invited; neither has Boozy Sims. You would n't have Jim Donovan's children there an hour. Be reasonable. What do you mean? Take down the bars and the grain-field would be a pasture, and the cattle would starve in winter. I know that, if I'm not a farmer."

"Exactly. But is n't one extreme as bad as the other? Suppose people try what they can do. Lots of things hinder. Those we want to help don't like to do a thing because it is advised. They want to be free. Then there are some that expect too much of a friend; the more you do for them the more you may. Some are n't safe company; and some we can't help,—I believe that. But,—how would you build a fire?"

"What's the moral?"

"If you were to build a fire for a clambake

down there on the shore you'd find the driest seaweed and the smallest dry sticks to start it. You wouldn't expect a great fire at once, or put on heavy wood until you thought it would burn. If we are to bring happiness and love and Christianity into the world, mustn't we begin in a small way? Suppose a lot of us begin to do a little, and do the best we can. What will come of it?"

"That spoils the complaint," I said. "Aren't people doing that now?"

She hesitated, thoughtfully. "Do you think it is done very much here—or elsewhere?" she asked. "I mean *this putting ourselves where others may take hold of us and lift themselves up!* Many people, I know, get interested in some one and try to help. By and by, when they don't succeed, or can't do it as they prefer, or expect to fail, they stop. Or when the new acquaintance is a little worn, or too many favors are asked, or they are disappointed in a person they thought worth helping, they say, 'Oh, you're not what I thought you were. I can't do much for you, I fear. Make the best of it, and maybe you'll learn something. Let me go, please!'"

Her eyes danced, and I smiled at the reality of the sketch.

"Now," she continued, "if we can make such a friendship that they will love or admire us they may want to do better for our sakes. When people do what you advise, is n't it because they believe in you? But there is something more than that; sometimes people become what we want them to be without realizing it. We make them so—in some way. I know it is n't easy, and people are not all alike. If they expect too much or don't appreciate what's done,—why, those are the hard things of friendship. But we may still be friends, and bring them what they need most, whether it is doing something for them or getting them to do for us, or for themselves, or for some one else.

"Some who would like to be friendly know what I know,—that if you try to be friends with people who are in a bad way, to make them better, it's hard to keep from being like them, unless you're strong and a Christian. I would n't dare go with some people only I know Christ did just such things. Oh, sometimes I feel so sick of all this vulgarity and lightness, and—dirt! And then I think, Christ did in this

way. If we live near to him how can we help living near to the people? Were n't the sweetest, most beautiful things he said spoken to those whom the better class would n't touch, or did n't dare keep company with? Did he try so hard to reach the rich and to please them as he did the wretched and the poor? And did n't he find manhood or womanhood where other people thought there was n't any? When he talked of his disciples as friends he did n't mean they were perfect companions. But how could he have found such a friendship as John's if he had not been a friend of sinners, too?"

"That sounds very nice," I said. "It is sweet to the taste. It makes me hungry."

"Yes! Now when we are hungry and satisfy some one else, does n't that satisfy us? Then when we do so some one is sure to love us, and that satisfies us in another way. You and I would n't be satisfied by having some one love us if there were nothing in us to love—don't you see? If they did so it would be from a feeling of pity or charity, and that would n't satisfy us. You and I want to be loved for our own sakes."

"I wish I could do good without be-

ing so oppressively conscious of it," I said gloomily.

Her eyes searched mine. "How will it be when the novelty has passed off?" she asked audaciously.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PHILOSOPHER AT HOME

"'T is the mind that makes the body rich."

—*Shakespeare.*

"Blessedness, Jesus affirms, comes not from outward but from inward states. When the torch is lighted even the dark crystals in the cavern will sparkle."—*W. B. Wright, D. D.*

"Life is clearer, happier, and easier for us as things assume their true proportions. Moody states come from nothing, are nothing, and go to nothing."—*Annie Payson Call.*

AUGUST came, with unusually changeable weather and occasional days of drizzle. A fog swept in from the bay on a morning when I was mentally and spiritually cloudy. Extremes of feeling are characteristic of nervous fatigue. It is also true that the weathercock often aids diagnosis in such cases better than the patient's indications. I tried to convince myself that the bitter chill of the sudden northeast damp was accountable for my melancholy. It was, chiefly; but it only dropped me into that mood toward which my reflections often tended.

When ambition is high and the body fresh,

the mind keen on the scent of what it thinks worth the hunt, and the hours occupied in self-forgetfulness, life slips on undisturbed. But when accident, disease, or other unforeseen circumstance, throws one off the scent, or a change of scene gives a new point of view and we look back on our chase, something asks within us, "What's it for?" It is a question that sometimes brings a decided shock.

I presume it was a good sign that the ills and evils of Echo Bluffs began to bother me. They were no worse than in many a locality, large and small, though of a peculiar stamp. It was merely a matter of personal attention. A slum is a slum, whether its indications are a vermin-infected rookery where vice and squalor rear their flourishing brood, or a ruined life that flaunts its degradation merrily, half-unconsciously, in the glory of country air, or a perfect social and personal exterior surrounding an unclean heart.

With radiant sunrises, invigorating breezes and quiet sunsets, with the beauty of the terraced town looking down on the sea, and the cheer of companionship and new interest in humanity, with days of tramping, yachting, fishing and

idleness, I had been drawing in more rapidly increasing vigor than I realized. But reaction sometimes comes even in recuperation.

One can't enjoy scenery from a narrow hotel window on a rainy day with a lurching telephone pole in front, and in the rear a dead hedge mocking a growing oat-field—the fog shutting off all distant scenes. It typifies and intensifies dissatisfaction with the imperfection of self and humanity and general conditions in a world where the goodness of the good emphasizes the badness of the bad.

I wanted to go back to my city life and work; but what for? I wanted to buy up the whole sardine industry, tenement houses and town, and transform it to my liking; but money does n't transform character at wholesale, and I knew it. With a fierce desire to escape from self, in the mood of the day, I would have exchanged lives and station with Shepard, or Nan Rhodes, or, for the sake of unjaded life and novel ambition, with a boy who cut fish. But the reacting thought persisted, "What for?" What was life for?

I turned to my latest "Record" to interest myself in the recent achievements of my own

science; but the monotonous drip-drip-drip of the wooden gutter kept my mind on the miserable weather; and the question flung itself between my eyes and the page,—“What for?” I tossed the journal aside impatiently and crossed the street for the mail,—which I did not want. I sat down gloomily on a nail-keg in the store and listened to the floating talk. Nat Murray entered with a flourish and huddled up to the fireless stove.

“Say, Alf, hain’t ye got a blanket ye can put on this stove? If the frost sh’d git into it, it ’ud bust it all to thunder!”

I hailed the prospect of relief. “Come up and see me, Nat.”

He shook his head with an air of business. “Can’t do it, doc. Company wants their mail, and I’ve got jest fish enough to fry to keep me till dinner. Say, I’ll tell ye: you come up and see me after dinner. I’ve got some things to show ye. I want ye to express some opinions, too.”

I went. The chill fog drizzled and threatened to become rain. When I reached the philosopher’s home (a little cottage that stood isolated in the east of the town), Nat met me at the door with a hail, and ushered me in with an introduc-

tion to his wife and a half-dozen little Murrays. We walked into his "parlor" where an open fire pouring its huge draft of smoke up the chimney, defied the chill and dampness of the day. A large, square hole in the floor above showed the method of winter heating.

"You see I'm warming up immensity," said Nat, following my gaze. "If you want a house built as you want it, build it yourself," he added, pushing me a huge rocker and stretching himself in another. "Here is where I take comfort. Do you know how I built this house? Wal, when I commenced I had a few sticks of timber, a few boards, and a farrer cow. That barn saw ten dollars, outside the lumber, which might have been ten more. An' the house,—wal, I'd gamble on my memory an' say it cost me a hundred, all told."

He gazed into the fire with a reminiscent look of satisfaction.

"How d'ye like the sardine business?" he asked suddenly.

"Interesting!" I exclaimed, my somber mood vanishing in the new atmosphere.

"We're doin' it fine this year," he said complacently. "Plenty of good fish, an' tin's cheap.

The owners take more pride in it when they can afford to. We like to handle fish that do up pretty, too. Sardines'll be cheap this winter, an' they'll be first-class sardines.

"I tell ye, doc, it's hard to be honest in the sardine business. Of course"—he wagged his head of cloudy hair with his argumentative gesture—"it pays to be honest because honesty is the best *policy*. But there's a chance to cheat in the whole business. I worked down t' the Cove one year before the 'Hot-box' burnt. Fish was skurce an' high, an' they come from down the coast mostly, and when they got here, hours on the trip, an' salted down, they was pretty poor—I say!

"Wal, we had a green crew mostly, an' the owners knew they could n't put up very good fish that year anyway. So they took in anything that came in that looked like a herring. When the owners cheat, the crew are sure to follow suit, —can't expect 'em to be any better than their masters. The cutters cheated; they did n't cut 'em right an' they did n't clean 'em. The flakers cheated; they let 'em lap over on the flakes, an' that kep' 'em from proper dryin'. The fryers cheated 'cause they was green, an' did n't

study how to git the oil at a proper heat an' did n't mind the fish ; an' they spread 'em out on the baskets with their hands instid o' givin' 'em a shake in the oil. It's easier to spread 'em with the hand, but it breaks the fish. The packers cheated ; they did n't put in fish enough. The sealers cheated ; they made more leaks than there was any need of. The bath-tender cheated ; he let the cans boil too long or too hard, an' that shakes the fish to pieces, 'specially if they 're soft. An' it knocks the cans together, an' so if they 're soldered tender it makes leaks. The menders cheated ; they took the leaks, all swelled up with bath-water like a toad, let out the water an' soaked in a little oil, an' patched 'em, an' the owners mixed 'em in with good sardines. In some things the help cheated the owners ; in some things the owners an' the help together cheated the public. I reckon they both cheated themselves."

His eyes twinkled. "Do n't wonder the fire insurance company had a policy to pay before the pack was sold that winter, do ye?"

"I'm not a judge of Yankee sardines," I observed, "but the present year's product seems to be handled well."

"Sure! That's what I said. Good fish, low tin; an' the best managers are tryin' hard to make the business what it ought to be, too.

"Some cheatin's more genteel than others," he continued. "I remember the year the 'Walnut' changed over from fried to baked fish. They used the same kind o' labels they used on fried fish the year before. Said they could n't afford to throw away twenty thousand labels. That's twenty thousand lies, ain't it?" He eyed me seriously.

"Are fried fish any better than baked?"

"You bet! If they wa'n't they'd 'a' changed them labels if it did cost 'em forty dollars."

He slapped my knee and chuckled. "Say, doctor!"

He pulled a ragged "Ram's Horn" from a pile of miscellaneous papers held down by "The Hand of God in History," and held up a series of grotesque cartoons of a well-known character conspicuous in the days of his bodily habitation for infidelity and wit. Dressed as a prize-fighter, the hero of the cartoon had built a man of straw to represent the religion he denounced, and with the ardor of faith in the power to destroy his own

creation was making "The Fearless Attack" and "The Bloody Defeat."

"Doc, what d'ye think of that man? You know him, I s'pose."

"Somewhat. He's dead now, you know. It's not best to talk about him, is it?"

"Wal, p'r'aps not. His books ain't dead; some of the boys here read 'em. But as he's dead, we won't talk about him, you understand" (with a look of innocence and charity that would have been a credit to an angel); "but readin' his talk, an' supposin' him to be somebody else he 'minds me of, I said—'bout th' other feller, ye know,—I wish you could hear yourself talk a full day. However, that would be impossible. He'd be deaf by noon an' dead by night."

"Yes?"

"P'r'aps I'm not a judge o' debate, nor theology,—but if he was here I'd ask him Hiram Slick's question. Hiram got mad at the caucus when they talked up the new road machine for a political dodge. Hiram said, said he, 'Sam Henley, which 'ud you rather, be a bigger fool than you seem, or seem to be a bigger fool than you are?'"

"Who is this 'other fellow' you are talking about, Nat?"

"Wal, he ain't here, so p'r'aps we'd better not take his name in vain. He sarved to illustrate, that's all. See?" A hearty laugh and his shrewd twinkle replaced the enforced innocence.

"Now, doc! I'm a powerful reader. I know what's good, too, an' it consarns me that other people do n't. Now, comin' back to this man and what he said an' writ: Which would make the best sardines, what the boys read or what they ought to read?"

"About sardines?"

"No; I mean this man's folderol, or something better."

"Something better, naturally. Can you suggest something better?"

"Wal, p'r'aps so. The minister looks after that pretty well. I tried to help him once sellin' them Sheldon books."

"What luck?"

"Middlin'. There's one question two-thirds of 'em ask, specially the girls: 'What are they—love stories?' I told 'em they was spiced a little with it, some of 'em considerable. 'But,' said I, 'do you know what a love story is like?' Wal,

no, they did n't. 'Wal,' said I, 'it's like a stick o' candy in a bottle.'"

He thrust the Ram's Horn carefully back into its place, threw another green stick on the andirons, and poked the fire with his wet boot till the sparks leaped.

"Yes, sir, the girls want love stories. An' they do n't know any more about love than when they began. They think they're learning somethin' about life." He paused and shook his head solemnly. "I think it leaves 'em an open prey to some fool's trap or some polished villain. Doc,"—rubbing his hand through his tangled hair—"why do n't somebody add a chapter or two to some of these love stories that end so nice, an' tell about the married life that comes after? Would n't that be an eye-opener, hey?"

"Very likely. But there ought to be more good stories of ideal home life. Have you read 'John Halifax'?"

He leaped to his feet and in a moment banged a worn copy on my shoulder. "Here you are, doc! Tell you what, I do n't want to read a book unless there's somethin' in it to read. Now I like poetry. There's only one man whose poetry I do n't like. If I could git hold o'

the man that wrote 'Beautiful Snow,' an' git him out in the woods when we have a soft, slushy mess of it I'd fall a tree on him."

It was a short and cheery afternoon. We scoured fields of interesting subjects, and the flashes of his robust wit lighted the last dark corner of my mind.

"So you find life worth living," I was saying in reply to his last remark, as I rose to go.

"I reckon so. Leastways, I reckon mine's worth three thousand six hundred dollars to my family."

"In life insurance?"

"No; I 'arned the interest on that at five per cent. last year! So I figgered up I must be wuth it. Now hold on, doc. I 'most forgot one question I got ye up here to answer. What do ye think of Christian Science?"

In some moods I might have answered with my natural sarcasm, but something in his absorbed and expectant interest, as if I held the solution of the problem, led me to pause. In fact, ridicule is the cheapest of arguments. Useful as it may be at times it is not equal to a candid statement of the truth.

"Suppose we say it is a lie to disregard the

reality of the body and of its laws. The Creator gives us medicine to remedy diseased conditions as he gives us food to repair the waste of the body and furnish its power,—just as you top-dress your land with fish and feed your fire with wood, and use grafting wax when you set your scions. Understand?”

“O’ course.”

“Suppose we say it is true that faith, content, religious thought, unselfishness, a good time, and disregard of pain with forgetting about yourself—that these things help to make us well and to keep us well. And it is both remarkable and natural that we can often make sickness or health by thinking ourselves sick or well. Do you see?”

“Sartin. Do you b’lieve that, doc?”

He eyed me quizzically. I saw the point and reddened, no doubt.

“’Cause if ye do, it won’t do ye a bit o’ harm to practise it a little more. I reckon I’ve been playin’ the Christian Scientist on ye this afternoon. Ye look better than ye did when ye came. It’s no use to eat your bread in sour milk when there’s plenty o’ sweet, I say. ’Minds me of a case down in Beck Harbor. A lot o’ women

down there turned to Christian Science. Job Holley's wife was one of 'em. He was away, an' she took sick. The neighbors sent for a Christian Scientist, of course, an' she was satisfied and imagined she was better. Gittin' worse all the time. Finally Job heard about it an' came home.

"Job's a cautious man, an' don't git into trouble unless he wants to. So he set down an' asked questions. Was very much interested, he said. Wanted to learn all about it. So the Scientist thought he'd got a new convert, I s'pose, an' he made things plain. When he got through, Job,—his wife had been coughin' all the while, an' Job set where he could see her—he began to look ugly. He went fer the divine healer. He thumped him down, an' wiped the floor an' dusted the chairs with him. 'I'm not shakin' you out,' he said; "you're jest imaginin' it.' He looked him over an' counted the bumps on his head, kinder deliberate. 'You're not hurt,' he said, 'but I see some manifestation o' your mortal mind.' Then he stood him up an' led him to the door and excommunicated him. 'There,' said Job, 'you jest go home an' imagine ye wa'n't kicked out, an' ye wa'n't.'"

CHAPTER XV

THE GRIST OF THE GIN-MILL

"The law should make vice difficult and virtue easy."

—*Gladstone.*

"The white moth to the closing vine,
The bee to the opened clover,
And the gypsy blood to the gypsy blood,
Ever the wide world over."

—*Kipling.*

I WAS walking home. The drizzling fog had turned to a rain that beat a quick tattoo on my umbrella. As I passed the parsonage Shepard hailed me in to supper. The children greeted me merrily and Dorothy informed me that a flock of crows had waited in the grove all the day for the sun to rise. Mrs. Shepard's cordial greeting and attractive table were a fine completion of the afternoon's cheer. Shepard, like myself, was glad to turn with a guest from thoughts of his work, and our conversation roamed over fields of travel and literature with sundry reminiscences.

When we passed from the dining-room to his study the talk drifted to local themes. He had

met with renewed disappointment in his temperance war. There is always abundant evidence of liquor selling—it might be said, abundant proof. But apparently a Lexow committee could never furnish sufficient proof to outwit the ingenuity of county officials in Maine, linked with the saloon power and skilled in mutual schemes of evasion of the law. And the Sphinx was never more dumb than the average righteous citizen when a crying evil demands brave opposition or unhesitating testimony.

“Jerry Phail can’t be caught,” said Shepard. “There’s no overwhelming evidence against him, or against some others of his kind. Some are more careless or more reckless. Last night’s steamer brought enough liquor to float the factories. I looked over the labels on the wharf, and more than half the rumsellers in the community were represented. Not Jerry—he sells regularly, but sneaks in his supply. These others are spasmodic, bring in a lot and sell it off and are out of the business for a time before anything can be said. But I thought I could trap them this time.

“I saw Jed Murphy’s team carting it from the wharf, and watched him drive to his stable. His

plan, I knew, was to distribute before morning. Now we've a local officer of the State League thirteen miles away, a brave fellow and keen on the scent,—likes the odor. He has a list of these men, and certain numbers correspond to names. I could devise no way of seizing the liquor in the stable. Our deputies here won't move in the matter. So I telegraphed the numbers to Elgin. He took warrants from his trial justice, and walked over in the night—thirteen miles, mind you. Now what happened? Oh, the old story! Somebody outsmarted us. At daylight, after an hour spent in proving the legality of the warrants, Elgin started with an unwilling deputy to enforce them. According to all precedents Jed Murphy would have had that liquor stored in the shops and holes of its owners before light. It wasn't to be found. Every bar was dry. When he went to Jed's stable it was still there on the trucks. Jed sat in the doorway, smoking, with an ankle bandaged, telling 'Cat' Smith he could n't deliver his 'oil' till his son came home,—sprained his ankle loading it! Every tag was torn from the barrels and—to mock us, I suppose—the scamp had put in their stead the very numbers I telegraphed. I do n't know how he

got them. But it's safe to say no county official can be found now who will touch those untagged barrels or even watch them. They will disappear from the stable some night, and not long after you will smell the liquor about the factories and on our citizens' breaths."

The hot blood rose to my brain. "It's your confounded law!" I exclaimed. "It does more harm than unlimited liquor. It's breeding an infamous set of rascals, deluging the state with poisons worse than alcohol—and no wonder your boys grow up with no reverence for law, or God, or man!"

He smiled, serenely, as if he had heard such argument before. "Yes, so it is said. They tell us we are violating natural rights, restricting personal liberty. Others say we are in advance of sentiment and must compromise. Of course there is more or less cry for license or local option. We have local option *on a large scale!* It's the 'no license' of the state constitutional amendment. If a boy has the sense I credit boys with, he can see that the law is better than the lawbreaker. The law coincides with the law of the body, the law of social good, and the law of American progress

from the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution down to the Emancipation Proclamation; and in agreeing with these it only agrees with the laws of God. Of course I know it is only a step by which we climb. The law in men's hearts and minds, of righteousness and common sense, is our final hope, to be sure. But we need the law as the Union needed the Sixteenth Amendment, though we're not obliged to enforce that now. I won't attempt to say what another state or your city can do to-day. But for ourselves,—we've considered the subject more carefully perhaps than you would believe. I can only say that we stand where the anti-slavery party stood fifty years ago, only we propose a long and bloodless warfare preceded by law rather than a bloody one with an Amendment at the close. As Lord Chesterfield said, 'Vice is to be prohibited, let the difficulties in executing the law be what they may.'"

There was a sharp ring of the door-bell. We listened as we heard Mrs. Shepard's footsteps in the hall. With a rush of wind at the open door came the sound of rain on the steps, and voices reached us.

The minister's wife entered in a flutter of

excited interest. "Here are Margaret Dixon and George Salter, Paul. Do you suppose?"——

"Yes, no doubt," he replied with a queer smile. "Excuse me, Marshall. I'll break the ice, then we'll let you serve as a witness."

He returned shortly and laid before me a marriage license issued to "George Salter. Age twenty-three," etc., "Margaret Dixon. Age seventeen," etc., and a little note:—

"I am willing Margaret shall be married.

"HARRIET DIXON."

"She isn't of age, you see. Her father, as you know, is dead, and this is her mother's consent. What lies back of it I don't know. And only God knows what kind of a future is to follow." He groaned. "I feel like a partner to crime!"

We entered the parlor. I greeted the young lovers with the informal ease of Echo Bluffs acquaintance. While Mrs. Shepard in the dining-room was quietly preparing refreshments with which the parsonage cases were always served, the minister kindled the parlor fire and we stirred up the chill of reserve that naturally surrounded the incomers. From the young

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man's crisp hair brushed back and the bright, restless blue eye, contrasted with the already weakened and besotted expression of the mouth, down over the fancy tie, square-cut coat and gray trousers to the wet boots, one could easily read the story of ill-guided ambitions and incontinent will. The young woman, her mother's fine features reproduced in the less definite outlines of immaturity, was a picture, in her gaily embroidered waist and damp, clinging skirt, of that limp, tenacious ivy that flings its tendrils into the weaknesses of decay. Words of Owen Meredith, which my natural cynicism had once led me to commit, flashed to mind:—

“'Tis in ourselves our love doth grow,
And when our love is fully risen within us,
Round the first object doth it overflow,
Which, be it fair or foul, is sure to win us
Out of ourselves. We clothe with our own nature
The man or woman its first want doth find.
The leafless prop with our own buds we bind,
And hide in blossoms . . .
We worship them for what ourselves we give them.”

When Shepard opened the ceremony with a prayer that revealed the solicitude hidden in the half-hour of frank, simple conversation, I could see in the expression creeping over the girl's

face a deepening impress of the solemnity of her new step.

They were quite merry and social over the refreshments that followed. It was interesting to note the bridegroom's efforts at gallantry and attention to his wife. But the surroundings constrained them in a measure and they bade us an early "Good-night."

The door closed as they walked down the orchard path. We looked at each other.

"Why did they come here? It would be a decent consideration of such weather and the girl to have the wedding at home!"

"I don't know," said Shepard bluntly.

Mrs. Shepard laughed. "Why, they didn't know it rained!"

CHAPTER XVI

A SEASIDE TALK

"Whoever lives true life will love true love."

—*E. B. Browning.*

"Love's secret only love itself can make intelligible."

—*Dora Greenwell.*

I RELATED the circumstances of the wedding to Nan Rhodes next evening where we sat on the rocks by the shore. The setting sun was hidden by the trees behind us, but its reflected beauty was draped about the islands. Nan had brought a half-dozen tots from the 'Acre,' and they were dancing, barefoot and gay, down the sandy beach.

"The harm began long ago," she said quietly as I finished. "These children are here to-night, having a clean, good time. They will be older next year and go with,—no one knows whom. Lots of good fathers die, and the mothers lose their hold on the children. Sometimes the parents never seem to care where the children are. They go anywhere, nights and Sundays, with any one—anything. Anybody and anything are

as good as they, they think. It's one thing for you and me to be free in our acquaintance. It's the way of people here, if they like, and we are old enough to choose our own company. But the children begin too young. If you put harm in a child's way and teach him what it is he may take it; if you don't teach him he is bound to take it."

"I hardly see how you can help acquaintance when they touch elbows in the cutting-shed," I said. "I'll warrant their blood is mixed when they slash their fingers."

"Acquaintance would n't hurt them so much if mothers taught their daughters what they themselves know. It all comes back to the fact that a girl may grow up without any religion. If a girl has no religion she's not likely to try for the best thought and living. If she has a religion she's bound to have some disgust for the vulgar. Margaret's mother ought to have taught her more of her own religion. That sounds old-fashioned, maybe, but it's right."

"This was a case of love, however," I returned, with a touch of irony.

"Margaret began wrong. She saw the same thing going on before her eyes when other girls

married drinking men. When George fell from the schooner's rigging and broke his arm she went by her impulses, not her reason. Any of us would have helped him if he needed it. He did n't. The men who sent him to the doctor knew he'd get there. He would have thought more of Margaret if she had kept away, and so would we. It was silly—nothing else—to walk through the streets with him, half-drunk."

"Quite dramatic!" I replied, tantalizingly.

"Her aunt made a mistake in taking him to board. Margaret always went there often; her aunt might have known how it would end. She pitied George. Now she and others will pity Margaret and her mother. Why did n't she pity them before?"

"It's the way of the world," I said, indifferently. "What begins is bound to be finished."

"No! Suppose they had not married. She'd have been sick awhile,—he'd have done better. She would have gotten over it, and so would he. If he had died with drinking she would n't have died. It would be just as well to be unhappy without him as with him. She's bound to be unhappy with him. Why not as well be unhappy

without him for a time as to live all the future in misery ? ”

“ Do you suppose she ever thought of that ? ”

“ Of course not. Some fall in love and marry, because they wish to, for better or worse. There’s another class of people who marry for better. They pick and choose. Which is right ? ”

She surveyed me with a glimmer of fun hidden behind a philosopher’s air.

“ In my opinion, based on observation,” I said bitterly, “ disappointment comes to both. How can we improve on nature ? Give man the passion and the dream ! Give woman the pleasure of being loved ! It may last. It’s nature’s lottery. If they draw blanks, let them make the best of it. It’s only a part of the confounded mystery of life. Let it go on ! It equalizes the race. I suppose you would have Mollie Rand refuse John Locksley because of his perpetual cigar.” I said it sarcastically.

“ If she did I would n’t call her foolish.”

“ Pshaw ! Nonsense ! ”

“ Men would n’t smoke, sir, if it were not that women do n’t care ! When men cease to improve upon nature by canning sardines and mixing

medicines, they may cease to improve in making homes and mixing blood. Is it less a work of nature when we respect the laws of God in body and soul, and when choice is more unselfish, and love knows what it is loving? We are none too good, and God help us to bear each other's failings! But may he teach us to love where love shall last!"

"Amen!" came in a familiar voice with a step crashing on the pebbles.

We started.

"Oh, I ain't eavesdroppin'. I'm lookin' for my clam hoe. But Nan's right—always is. There ain't much poetry in it when Sim Slick an' Jennie Fly walk up to the parsonage. If there is it won't rhyme a great while."

The steps crunched down the beach. I suppose I looked my vexation. Nan laughed.

"Never mind! Nat's harmless! Now to go back to your theory"——

"Nonsense! I have no theory. I had theories once, but the facts damaged them hopelessly."

"Well, what you believe is your theory. Now let us try exceptions. Shall I lose my heart to the first can-maker who loses his head in

a fancy for me?" She looked at me with merry, mocking eyes.

"Opinion deferred."

"Are your old theories so damaged that you prefer love to common sense in your own case?"

"That's an incomplete question. I hope to be saved such a dilemma."

"Joe Snell loved Annie Rogers three years ago, no doubt. What came of it?"

"I know. Joe's a brute and his wife's a Tartar."

"But some one else might have made him a man, and a different husband might have made her a woman. There's too much haste about it. What will be the end of last night's wedding?"

"Marrying a drinking man does n't save him, I know," I replied. "But you only prove the lottery. Some lose, some win. You put them in two classes and argue for the class who marry to better themselves. I've seen a great deal of that. What weddings do you get? Icebergs and flame! Money-bags and beauty! What's the result? Souls starved in the briars!"

She was silent. Evidently my abruptness and intolerance confused her. She took up the thread again patiently.

"No, doctor. I'm not arguing for either class. There is something better than either of these ways. Don't suppose I am trying to show that I know more than you. You are talking to a sardine factory girl. Very well."

She paused and leaned her face upon her hand and looked far across the water.

"I am glad I am a sardine factory girl. It has kept me from carelessness to live and labor with people hard at work and miserable and sometimes low-down."

She sat upright and looked into my eyes with a cool, unflinching gaze. A refinement and dignity came to her speech and manner.

"Suppose we try to think for a moment as if we were equals,—just equals, and neither of us knew, but we wanted to help each other find the truth. Is n't it a step of progress when reason begins to take part in the choice of a husband or a wife? What else can a doctor or any thinking man believe? Does n't finer love come from a more cautious mind? I don't mean the strongest love. That might be blind devotion, and the brute has that. But in real progress, is n't blind devotion rare? Does n't blind love sink into selfishness and die?"

"No matter how glad and earnest love is, suppose there is not a single taste or sentiment or pleasure we can share. Suppose we are different in all our thought and choice and purpose. Isn't it better to think of it before marriage and ask if the choice is right? Don't unhappy lives come from disappointments that must be borne all through life because marriage has come and can't be remedied? We are all human. Love must feed at the same table with its mate, or it will go somewhere for company, or starve alone. Could I marry a man who did n't love to help folks in need? Or you a woman who disliked song? The mere fact that people love each other is n't reason enough for marrying."

"Why do n't you establish a marriage sanitarium?" I cried. "Get instruments; dissect and analyze. Repair the deformed, prescribe for the heart, minister to the diseased fancy. But what will you do to make love?"

"Yes! love will spring up like a passion, I know, and we may thank God for it. But it may die like a passion. If we are wise can't we see its dangers, and help it find its true home? Do n't you see what I mean?"

She paused, with a pathetic look as if words

failed her thought. "Lives may be well mated, even if we cannot expect them to be alike. I know I cannot have a home—nor can you—where every taste and thought will be like mine, or made to please me. But if I surrender my life both carefully and unselfishly, I shall hope to love more than when I began. If I devote myself to the needs of a life won't I find something like this?—Instead of a perfect heaven of rest and peace, a little world of activity and devotion will be making a heaven in my own heart, and perhaps a heaven in the heart of—that other. And two heavens so near to each other will make a larger heaven, won't they, in which we shall come to live? Isn't it as true of love as it is of religion, 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God'? Of course it cannot be just what we expect. We may make it better than we thought it could be, but in a different way. We should be fools to let our tastes die when we might try to share them with each other; and we ought to see enough of other friends to enjoy our tastes with them; because no matter how much we get out in the world we can come back to home and those we love, and feel there is no place like it,—for love is there

and growing every day. Common aims and interests may grow and make us more unselfish than can similar tastes. I know what you are thinking: What do I know about love and homes? A great deal, Doctor Dee!"

"You credit the race with a power of fine discrimination," I replied, gruffly, "and it will go on in its blundering way. There's a good chance that you may make a bad choice for yourself. Men are as deceptive as—as deceptive as the devil, Miss Rhodes, if you will take an honest statement of fact, even when they don't intend to be!"

She smiled, as in appreciation of the humor, or the fact. "My way of life is to make circumstances yield something," she said; "if not in one way they must in another. Some good thing must come out of life, wherever it may be. I am bound to get something I need to keep my own life brave and my heart warm. But if I am selfish I am bound to fail. 'Love seeketh not her own.' If I am doing good and helping some one else it all comes back to me. It's hard to do just right, I know. Sometimes we may think our love is unselfish, and we want to let it have its own way, when we ought to refuse because God

has something better for us. Sometimes we think it is selfish when it is only the reward God has put before us. We can only pray and trust, and live one day at a time, and do what seems right. If we are not certain what is right we can only do what conscience tells us.

“Oh, we have our dreams, our dreams! Thank God for a religion that teaches us that we may be something more than butterflies, and that there is something better to do than watching the butterfly.”

She seemed alone with her thoughts, unconscious of me. The far-away look of passion and pain grew into a radiance of sweetness and light. With the glow of her face under the halo of her hair, as she turned her spiritual eyes across the sea, she seemed to have come from some great Elsewhere where I had never been, but whose light was breaking upon me.

It was a time for the soul to think. Something stirred within me, unlike my selfish hunger for love and some one's perpetual ministry.

But thoughts of the soul may breathe themselves into another soul. Nan rose with a quiet gesture toward the children, far down the beach, and with a smile and uplifted brow, as if to draw

me back to the common round of life, slipped away.

I picked up the white rose that had fallen from her hair—a half-blown bud, still untarnished. Through the opening gate of its petals I gazed into the fresh, pure stillness of its heart, long,—long,—until the tempest quieted within me and my restless thoughts refined to an unselfish and sacred affection ; and I said, “It is the heart of Nan Rhodes. Let me know it as it is.”

So I sat alone, turning life over and over and over in my mind, until the stars were lighted and my soul was spent with its dreaming.

CHAPTER XVII

INTO AND OUT OF THE DARK

"The surest bulwark against evil is friendship."—*Cicero*.

I am sketching life as it is, you know. If this down-east tale is overburdened with moralizing and philosophy credit it to the characters and the scenes among which it was born. They speak for themselves.

In that clear atmosphere, unfogged by conventionality or sophistry, the right and the wrong stood in greater contrast—the line of light against the wall of darkness.

The great drama of the world's life has the same lessons to teach. But the simple by-play shapes it more swiftly and vividly. A poet's line reveals nature as no text-book can do.

There is a sense, an instinct, an appetite, if you will, by which life grasps for companionship, for unity. Apart from all acquired notions or ill-bred sentiment it is still true that the strongest passion for companionship and the finest promise

of it comes neither to man and man, nor to woman and woman, but to man and woman.

The rude chumship of the fish-cutters, boy and girl, side by side at the slimy tables sprawled with herring, is no less admirable than the school friendships of more refined life. The unconventional freedom of acquaintance in such a co-educational institution as a sardine factory has its delicate phases and wholesome companionships. The fine law of rectitude or the finer instinct of purity may weave garments of chastity in thought and life. This may be as true under ragged vest and oil-stained waist as behind evening dress and society gown. And if the path into the forest of life beckons two to walk side by side, not in search for gaudy flowers and intoxicating roots, but for an unselfish sharing of beauty and the discovery of a home,—this is as truly the sweetness of life for Tom and Annie as it was to Tennyson, who said of his wife: “The peace of God came with her into my life.”

But such ideal sentiments and conditions were scarcely true of the majority.

At such times as a rush of fish compelled night labor and I sat by the shore on hot nights and watched the factory lights, I thought of young

girls' lives spent in monotony, knowing little of that companionship which comes with a sharing of fine tastes and spiritual interests, or the wholesome associations of books, or music, or nature; the bloom of purity of mind and soul brushed off by the rude familiarities of men and the coarse vulgarities of women; every daily experience pointing them along the same muddy pathway and saying, "This is the whole of life." There the finer dreams and sweet instincts of early childhood were being blurred and disfigured, and the realities of living were shutting out the ideals of life and the realities of God and heaven.

I saw them stream out at late hours of night, loth to lay fatigued bodies to sleep until companionship, or excitement, or novelty, had brought compensation for the day's work or forestalled the monotony of the morrow; the night's grateful coolness or sultry breath deepening the sense of the hot, perspiring body, as they strolled recklessly or thoughtlessly into ill-chosen associations, or sat for midnight chats on the cold rocks by the sea.

At a late hour on one of those August nights I stood by the shore and watched the "Shamrock" pour out its living tide. The night was dark and

warm, but a restless, sense-stirring westerly air strolled lazily along the coast, driving away the consciousness of fatigue and the desire for sleep. Some hurried to their homes, some lingered in groups with noisy chatter and gayety. It was a trysting hour of some lovers, as holy as yours or mine might be—if such were our lot. Elsewhere knots of youth and girls walked the beach in the reckless delight of freedom and companionship. The scent of liquor floated on the breeze. From the distance I saw through the open doorway of the fire-room. The fireman swung open the furnace doors with a clang, and threw black sheets on the bed of coals, to cover the night fire. The flame burst from the stack above the roof and scattered its glow over the sky and shore. I resented the fact that Nan Rhodes had chosen such a life and work. I thought of the lurid influences of factory life and said bitterly, “It is the glare of hell!”

Nat Murray strode up the shore path, swinging his lunch-pail. He almost stumbled against me as I stood there, absorbed.

“Gee-whittaker! That you, doc? It’s so light inside it makes it darker’n a pitch-pot when we come out.”

He pushed up his cap and wiped a perspiring brow. "Watchin' the sights, hey? Or be ye tryin' to keep cool?"

"Both. Are you going home now?"

"Sartin. I've got to be at that blamed fryer again at five o'clock in the mornin'. Don't ketch me out nights, unless it's to sleep on the grass."

We walked up the shore together and cut across to the street, both silent; he fatigued, I busy with my thoughts.

"It's all right!" he interjected. "There's off days enough to make up. There ain't any too much work. The 'Resurrection' run short o' fish two days, an' I had the gre't good luck to get in a long day over the 'Shamrock's' fryer. I hain't no use for the fellers that complain because some people do n't have to work for a livin'. They do n't realize that people that have money kin take keer o' themselves and let the rest of us have the work. If everybody had to work for a livin',—thunder! there would n't be work enough to go 'round. Somebody 'd starve, sure!"

We passed the forms stretched idly on the green banks by the road, the chattering groups,

and couples walking silently arm in arm. We walked through the Hollow, past Jerry Phail's den, and were climbing the lonely hill beyond when we heard behind the untenanted cottage a girl's hysterical laughter, ending in a suppressed shriek.

Nat stopped. "More mischief!" he exclaimed.

He dropped his lunch-pail by a tree and leaped the fence. I followed his dark form as he crept past the veranda and around the trellised vine to the corner of the cottage. There he paused, and I leaned over his shoulder with a sense of intrusion and excitement.

Against the lighter background of water and sky we saw two figures. The girl stood in a strained, repellent attitude, the young man with an arm around her neck and a bottle thrust urgently to her lips.

"Take it, Jen," he pleaded. "You think it's whiskey. 'T ain't; it's good!"

Nat sprang upon him like a cat. "The devil's got ye, Smut White!" he snarled.

He seized the slight body by the nape of the coat and clasping the struggling legs ran to the cliff and flung him into the sea.

"Cussed little runt," he muttered, panting, as he strode back to Jennie Kent's side.

"Now see here, young lady! you've had experience now. Can ye larn anything? You'd better git under some mother-hen's wing or ye'll git ketched in a shower!"

She sank on the grass with mortification and tears. I drew back further in the darkness.

Nat took her hand kindly. "Go home now, Jen. Nobody knows this but you 'n' me. Smut won't tell. If he does I'll soak him deeper. Keep still about it an' be good. You're spoilin' your name. There's some folks has found out the Almighty can forgive sins for them that he can't for anybody else."

He drew her firmly to her feet and led her, weak and unresisting, to the gate. He waved his hand toward the village, and picking up his pail started homeward, in the opposite direction.

I followed the girl's lagging, trembling footsteps in the darkness, fearing some sequel. Down into the Hollow, past Jerry Phail's death-trap she paused and leaned on the road-rail where I had found Grant Hamilton on the night of his temptation.

The light of the drug-store streamed upon her.

She drew her hand nervously across her forehead. Where I stood in the shadow the road-rail trembled. Then she clasped her hands together convulsively.

“O God, don’t tell mother!” she prayed.
“Help me!”

She drew herself erect, and I saw or felt the tightening of the finer lines of her pretty, weak face as she stood in the glare of the light. Then she turned and walked so swiftly I could scarcely keep my shoes from crunching on the pebbled road as I followed. By the tenements of the “Acre” she paused, irresolutely. Nan Rhodes’ lighted curtain was glowing, and the cheery sound of a hymn drifted from the open window :—

“Son of my soul, thou Saviour dear !
It is not night if thou be near.
O may no earth-born cloud arise
To hide thee from thy servant’s eyes.”

Jennie Kent was knocking at Nan’s door. In a moment light fell across the threshold and a hand and a welcoming voice drew her in. It was midnight. I stood alone, hoping for another song ; but the low tones ceased, and then I heard the sound of prayer.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SCRIMMAGE END OF TRANQUIL ALLEY

"The only way to have a friend is to be one."—*Emerson.*

"A friend is most a friend of whom the best remains to learn."
—*Longfellow.*

ISOLATED from other factories two long rows of tenements lead from a town road to the wharf on which stands the "Scrimmage." This is Tranquil Alley. It lies westward of the town, distant from steamboat wharf and railway, and lacks the jangle of the "Acre."

There's an instinctive aptness in the naming of factories that savors of foreordination. The "Scrimmage" took its name from an incident in its early history. A huge specimen of female humanity, who bore the suggestive surname of "Moses," came from some northern town to pack fish. Her interesting characteristic was a genuine pleasure in doing as she pleased. It is customary to pack a number of cans, then to "head." Mrs. Moses broke the monotony of this custom by packing and piling tiers of cans upon her table,

to be headed at the consent of her inclination—possibly the next day. A rush of fish sometimes found her table piled, and herself absent. It was useless to threaten discharge. She would head when she chose and leave when she liked, she declared. She annoyed the “mush” collector by putting her mush-pan on the floor and demanding it emptied at unseasonable and unreasonable times. Finally the foreman lost patience one day over a table loaded with unheaded cans.

“Head up those cans and leave!” he ordered.

“Then gimme my checks now,” she demanded. He passed them over with a sigh of relief and turned away. A half-hour later he found her place vacant, the cans still unheaded. With a grunt of humiliation at a victory that savored of defeat he headed the cans, to the amusement of the packers.

But Mrs. Moses stood at a distant corner table, packing fish. At night she appeared and demanded checks for her new work. The foreman’s anger rose to the height of his diminutive stature, but Mrs. Moses, towering above him, brandished her “header.”

“Gimme my checks, Tom Harrison,” she com-

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manded, "or by the Lord that made ye there'll be a scrimmage!"

There was no scrimmage. Mrs. Moses gained the victory, and the factory gained a name without a baptism of blood.

It was a cheery pleasure on cool evenings to stroll from the town road to the "Scrimmage" end of Tranquil Alley. I liked the quiet, leisurely atmosphere and scenes—men sitting on doorsteps, or stretched on the grass, boys at ball or improvising a ring-toss with horseshoes, or at some of the athletic feats or sports initiated by Shepard at his factory gymnasium; women at their evening chat, girls in doorways combing out their long hair in graceful unconcern,—freshened by the evening scrub and the abandonment of the ever-striking contrast between oily garments and a surplus of decorating combs, so noticeable at the packing-tables. There might be found also Ted Smith piping his flute, rendering last year's popular songs with a vivid expression peculiar to the cutter boy of a half-score of years. There was a wholesome flavor in the scene, and, in general, there was a wholesome type of humanity. It was chiefly a colony of folk who came from the mills of Highton with the slackness of sum-

mer mill-work and who brought more of the sobriety and steady industry of all-the-year workers, such as was not characteristic of those longer employed in the irregular labors of the sardine factories.

This was the musical quarter. I wondered that Nan Rhodes had not chosen her lodge among them. Often when the grass and steps were dotted with workers enjoying the cool of the evening a strain of song started and was caught up along the alley. Sometimes a group gathered at the "Scrimmage" end and sang on and on, song after song, until the starlight glimmered and the sound rose weirdly out of the darkness.

It was an evening of the week following Jennie Kent's rescue. I was strolling back from a short country walk, enjoying the quiet of the evening and busy with my thoughts. I had not seen Nan Rhodes for several days, and was conscious of an incompleteness of that period and a half-formed wish that she might be discovered without searching, when I saw her coming from the town. We met at the head of the alley.

"I wanted to see you," she said frankly, with a smile of evident pleasure as we turned down the alley. "My mind has been full of thoughts



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all day, and I want to be with some one who can think and talk. Such evenings seem to be made for thinking and talking. Have you been watching the clouds? At such times as this it seems as if God is very near—so near you can feel him. And then one can't help feeling sad to think any one in such a beautiful world can be willing to sin. When God seems so near as he does to-night sin seems much more sinful."

"You've been watching the dark clouds, I'm afraid," I said. "I prefer the gold and the pink!"

"Don't you think there's something beautiful in the dark clouds of the sky? Perhaps that is true in life, too. I believe it is possible for a man to be both very good and very bad—at times at his best and at times at his 'worst. Last Sunday afternoon I read Tennyson's 'Palace of Art.' Our talks stir me up so I must read and read to satisfy the questions that come up afterwards. It's a help to be with some one who talks so that we *must* think. We don't know till afterwards that we have received anything. Then we find we have been helped, even if we don't think alike.

"But I must go to Jennie Kent's first," she

continued. "I want you to go. You ought to know that girl more. She needs"——

There was a sound of music from Jennie Kent's window. Nan looked her surprise. Coming to the house, we saw Guy Wilson seated within, Jennie at the instrument. Nan hesitated, quickened her steps, and we passed on. We walked silently to the end of the alley and turned to the grassy bank where she flung herself down and was lost in thought.

"Did you ever feel," she asked, "as if there was just one thing more to do to save a life, and you did not know what it was?"

"I do n't recall," I replied. "That's another of your mysterious figures of speech, I suppose."

"Jennie Kent has n't touched her organ since her mother died. You know what her companions have been. Now, look! Guy has done well all summer. How well I do n't know. He does n't talk much but it's plain he has set himself against liquor. If he had n't he would n't have helped me on the Fourth."

"How was that?" I asked with surprise.

"Have you forgotten our fish chowder?"

"Which you sang to advertise?"

"Oh, not exactly," she laughed. "I sang to

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hold the men as much as I could from the clutches of any pocket peddler, or to keep them from turning off to the saloons. Mr. Shepard told me some one was sure to peddle liquor in the crowd on the Fourth, as usual; he knew it, though he did not say how. Something in his face made me sure that he knew more than he cared to tell. I was wondering about it the same night and feeling sad, when I met Guy. I saw he had something on his mind. I never ask Guy to say more than he naturally wants to speak. Finally he blurted out that some one would pocket-peddle on the Fourth, and he 'guessed' Mrs. Cook and he would have a fish chowder ready about the time the sports were over. And he 'guessed' I'd better bring some of the girls. I said nothing, only that I would, gladly. When you and Mr. Shepard came to us on that afternoon, down by the wharf, I was just giving Guy a chance to say a little more. Then you told us where Jennie was. I don't know how I came to do it—but it was all so plain! I knew that I must get the girls and keep them, and I must keep the crowd, too. When they are idle and dry they get restless and desperate. You don't know what a lot of

liquor can be passed about in a short time then. I saw some of the men slipping away, and lots of them looking about,—thirsty. I had to do it. If I had lost some of my best friends I'd have sung to hold that crowd and keep the girls."

Her lashes were moist and her voice unsteady, but she kept her eyes upon mine with a smile quivering about her lips.

"In all of that Fourth of July there was not a row, and not half so many drunk as we thought there might be. Mr. Shepard expected trouble. Guy expected it. Why didn't it come? What has come over Guy? One night last week Jennie came to my house, at midnight, trembling and frightened. She wouldn't talk, but she held my hands and cried, and wanted me to pray. Now she has Guy with her and has opened her organ. What does all this mean? I feel that something must be done or we shall lose the dream. What are we to do?"

It was time for me to be astonished. I sat down at once and rehearsed the moonlight scene on the beach,—the heroic drama of Guy's temptation and victory. With a sense of the injustice I had done her in my judgment of her acts on the Fourth, and of the error of my long

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silence in relation to Guy, I threw into the story all the fire of an awakened conscience. Then I told my experience of the night of Jennie's encounter with Smut White, and how I had followed her with a sense of guardianship, until I saw her disappear in Nan's doorway. For the first time in our acquaintance I saw Nan lose all self-control and burst into a flood of tears with an ecstasy of glad emotion and wonder. I felt the stirring up of my own life, and my thoughts went back to a memory of the past as I thought of the strange influences that were combining to refashion lives—even my own—in that old sardine town.

"It's wonderful, I admit," I said. "But it must come out right. Your sardiners don't tell you, nor any one else, all of their secrets. They are working out their own problems. But I don't believe they've taken a step that was n't led by your influence and devotion. You do it. I can't; or at least I don't. I can't believe possible for myself what happened in the days of my youth even to old Tom Morgan."

I saw her bitten lips as an involuntary cry came from them:—"What was that?"

"About Tom Morgan? He was an eccentric

doctor, born so—to be a physician and eccentric, too. He lived and practised in my college town. He was fine at surgery. When he closed his eyes and passed his hand over a fine fracture or sounded a lung he seemed to see with his fingers.

“But his touches were not always lovable. He was brusque; no, he was ugly! Any of his patients would have said so. If there was any complaint at his roughness he would grunt in a self-satisfied way. When I was wrung and twisted in a football match and he was called to discover any sound bones that might be found I thought his examination was fine. But when it came to repairs he was a veritable thumbscrew. I lost my temper outright and told my opinions in as plain language as I could deliver. He stopped and watched me through his half-closed eyes until I finished. Then, with his peculiar grunt, he continued his work as if nothing had happened. It meant, ‘Sympathy’s a bad thing, young man. You’ll do better on this.’

“But the world is n’t made to like that treatment. I acknowledge it, though I am much like him. He had little practice, and it seemed as if his manner and method were to ruin his success.

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Finally he sold some lands to great advantage and made a small fortune. He had fine tastes and a passion for travel, and he placed his practice in the hands of a younger man and departed. We heard no more of old Doctor Morgan for a couple of years, and then, in the fall of my senior year—the year Paul Shepard entered college—his office curtains were up again and a new, bright sign was at the left of the door.

“It was a new Doctor Morgan, too,—the same man, hypnotized or reconstructed in some unaccountable manner. Some thought it was the benefit of change and travel and good fortune; some, because he was glad to be at home and at work again. Both helped, perhaps; but most of us thought something had happened.

“He always had an eye on the students who were fitting for medical school, with a sort of quizzical and critical study of their adaptability. He was a good judge of the right type of men for the profession, and he usually knew more about the students than they supposed. One day, passing me, he checked his horse as if he intended to speak; then, with his old grunt, drove on. The next day I found a note in my mail—a request to call. It was impossible to expect of Tom Mor-

gan anything in the nature of a social invitation. I puzzled over it, and worried a little, but I went. He shook hands with some restraint but with a touch as if he wanted to make friendly acquaintance, drew a chair, took out his watch and eyed it and me. I can see the scene to-night.

“‘I’ve just twenty minutes to talk,’ he said finally; hesitated and then said abruptly, ‘What do Tom Morgan’s patients say about him?’

“I stared. But I saw a chance to even up old scores, so I began back in the past and rehearsed all the hateful and idiotic things I had heard. He shrank, but kept still, biting his mustache. When I had said about all I dared he merely said, quietly, ‘Go on.’

“Then my conscience took me over the weeks since his return, and I told him frankly the better things I had heard more recently. He smiled with a grim pleasure, and when I had finished, he said:

“‘All right, young man. That’s what I want. Now you are starting to make the same kind of man I have been, and you’ll get the same reputation as sure as you have the same character. I want to tell you a story. If you have any sense

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you won't repeat it, and if you have a little more you'll profit by it.'

"He drew his chair nearer, and his voice took a different tone.

"'I was in a German city two summers ago,' he said, 'and met with a hot day that made me forget things for a time. Then I found myself in the emergency ward of the city hospital. I was in bad condition when consciousness came. I knew it, and did n't care to talk, whatever happened. I told them to do what they pleased and I would watch the game.

"'They did well enough, doctors and nurses. But it was a long, tedious illness, the first in the thirty odd years of my professional life, and I was nervously shattered. Their touches were like the point of a tailor's goose, and their skilful treatment seemed like mending broken nerves in a blacksmith shop.

"'One day when my head was broiling,—conditions all right, no one to blame, nothing else to be done, only I was lonely and cheerless,—a girl who came in to visit passed my cot. She saw my eyes, I suppose, and knew how I felt.'

"Doctor Morgan bent over his chair and looked through me.

“‘My young friend,’ he said in a tone that reached deeper than his eyes, ‘*when she passed her hand down over my face I felt her soul through her finger-tips!*’

“Then he flung himself back in his chair and watched me.

“‘That’s not all,’ he said, ‘but it’s enough. Do you see?’

“I nodded, as if I understood, though I was uncertain. We arose, and he pressed my shoulder with a fatherly touch and bowed me out, without a word. I begin to feel the force of his lesson now. It is plain to you, I suppose.”

I had been gazing about the scenery while talking, with only an occasional glance at Nan. I turned to find her face brilliantly flushed. Whether she was struggling for speech or silence I could not tell. She turned away. Then she lifted her hand suddenly and pointed up the alley.

“Look!” she exclaimed, “Tom Horton and Joe Arthur are going to Jennie Kent’s. Let me go, please?”

She looked at me pleadingly, and I bowed. I watched her hurried steps, wondering at the sudden dispensing with my presence in her

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visit at the cottage, and somewhat chagrined at the lack of comment on my tale of Tom Morgan, and the loss of a chat on "The Palace of Art."

CHAPTER XIX

AN OUTWARD-SWINGING DOOR

"Death hath so many doors to let out life."

—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

THEN began the course of events that made the last three weeks of my sojourn at Echo Bluffs an ineffaceable record, and converged all my life towards a new center, whence a new path was to be found.

The scenes of that Sunday in late August will hang forever on the walls of my memory. It was a golden morning. Across the great depths of blue sky were stretched long bands of "cat-tail" clouds. A white sail lay idly upon the horizon. There was an intense quiet—an August Sabbath quiet, that the chirrup of locusts and the occasional chipper of bird or squirrel seemed to emphasize rather than to break. Down in the harbor where the schooners were drying sails wet with the heavy rain of the preceding night we heard the rattle of tackle and cordage; and from an orchard near by the dropping of a ripened apple. Strange, how vivid are

some details, how blurred others! I tell the day's story simply, as it flashes in my memory now like a hurried dream.

Nat and I were standing on the church steps after the morning service, awaiting the close of Sunday-school.

"Well, Nat, did you learn anything new to-day?"

"Sartin! Two things. Fer one, I learned this holler in the neck is to ketch a shirt button when it comes off in meetin' time. Fer the next—doctor, if men should come to church dressed up in their character instid o' their clothes what a sight they'd present! Hullo, what's up now? Wet hair, and on the dead run. What do you want, Tom?"

"Send the minister out."

Nat stepped back and beckoned to Shepard, who came to the door.

"Mr. Shepard, you'd better go tell Joe Arthur's father his boy's drowned."

"Joe Arthur? Where?" Shepard quivered like a leaf. "How long ago?"

"Half an hour—Northern Lake—gittin' pond lilies. He swum out an' got ketched in 'em. I can't—I can't! Can't you tell his folks?"

"Rob's out on the schooner," put in Nat.

I gripped his arm. "A horse?" I asked. Nat nodded. "Take the deacon's."

"Let some one else tell his father," I gasped in sudden excitement and sympathy. "Here, quick!" and in a trice Shepard and I had sprung into the buggy and were swinging with a gallop over the hill through the forest road winding to the lake. A mile we rattled over a lane that mocked us with its ragged surface. Minutes dragged and our minds outran the clattering hoofs. We passed a house not far from the lake, where I shouted for blankets and jugs of hot water, and they stared but nodded in dim comprehension. We hitched at the last fence and raced through the swamp. A white gleam, the unmistakable tint of the human body as it was lifted from the water to the raft, caught my eye as I pushed through the bush.

"Out with him, boys! To the shore now, lively! Strip your coats,"—to the bystanders. "Down here,—easy."

I pressed from his lungs the stream of water that told the story of the last breaths. We stretched the fine muscular form on the coats, my own bunched under his back, and while

Shepard held the slippery tongue I began the task of artificial respiration. How the summer's acquaintance and the sense of a new relation to humanity had affected me I realized in the absorbed and eager interest that bound me to the object beneath. Of the crowd that surrounded I saw hardly a face. When the jugs and blankets came we placed them quickly and I kept willing workers rubbing hands and feet. We worked in silence except for my sharp and somewhat intolerant orders. Occasional whiskey—a hasty search for the pulse, but my own throbbed so violently in every finger that I could only hope, uncertainly, one was there. It's only a fragment of hope that can hang over a body forty minutes or more under water, but it is a hope that should never be abandoned till all reasonable efforts at resuscitation have failed. A half-hour passed, and the perspiration was streaming from my body. The sun slipped below the branch of a tree and poured its intolerable impertinence into my throbbing eyes.

"Better give up, doc," said a voice sympathetically. "Us 'at knows the sea 'as seen more drowned than you. 'E's dead—sure."

The men at his limbs slackened.

"Give up every one of you if you like," I said passionately; "I'm here till I've done my duty." The hands quickened and worked on in silence. How I longed for oxygen and instruments! As time wore by and no faint pulse revealed itself and the forced breaths grew less natural, unmistakable signs hushed every hope in my heart and I laid the bare arms sadly on the chest. I looked up at my surroundings. The boy's uncle stood by.

"It's of no use, James," I said with a sudden dry sob—unusual to a physician accustomed to announcing death. "We've done what we could."

From the vehicles that had gathered a long wagon was chosen to carry the body to the sorrow-seized home. Stiff with my long unchanged posture I limped up the path, and Shepard and I were driven back to town.

Next day I sat in the two-roomed cabin by the side of the body, wiping the foam from its lips, while the father hung above the changed countenance of his son.

"My Joe! He was mine—God's now," he groaned. "My best boy. I don't know. O Joe!"—a kiss—"O God!"

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The tear-spent mother plied her irksome morning tasks. The young brother sat in the rough doorway wrapped in childish thoughtfulness and sorrow. Little Minnie, golden-haired and strangely sweet in such surroundings, hung about like a child-angel, so free from sadness, so curiously rapt with the new experience.

CHAPTER XX

LESSONS FOR THE LIVING

"To me there is always something impious in the preparing for death that people talk about; as if we were not continually, whether in the flesh or out of it, living in the Father's presence."—*D. M. Mulock.*

"Death 's but a path that must be trod
If we would ever pass to God."

—*Parnell.*

THE scene in the old church is as real as yesterday—the casket, piled with flowers, the simple offerings gathered in the fields by children and the wealth of beauty and perfume brought by sympathizing hearts from gardens and homes; the thronged pews silent and throbbing with the strange blending of humanity. Tom Horton, Guy Wilson, John Hunt and Stephen Somes were assigned the last task and honor. There were faces which I knew, never seen in public or social mingling before,—men and women whom the church walls seldom enclosed. Home and hovel, office, saloon, factory, farm and fishboat were represented. Mrs. Gray's aged, spiritual face, hallowed with traces

of reminiscent sorrow, half obscured the gross countenance in the adjacent pew—Jerry Phail. The father, shading his eyes with trembling hand, sat in quiet, thoughtful grief; the mother, weighted with despairing sorrow intensified by her garb; the young brothers and sisters in hushed absorption or tears. The slow, subdued strains of “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” stole from lips and organ in the chancel. Then Paul Shepard, with white and priestly face, was reading the fourteenth of John. With the evidence of his own hushed grief in his drawn features as he turned to the varied audience before him, there was something stern and searching in his eyes that almost hid the sympathy that we knew was in his aching heart. He spoke with a slow, impressive force and gesture:

“In the harbor of one of our Atlantic cities to-day a steamer is setting out upon its ocean voyage. Of those who stand upon the pier to say ‘Good-bye’ some are smiling and some are in tears. But in the interests of business or pleasure such voyages are made. Friends and home lives are willing to endure absence because there is reason for it.

“I ask, Is it not possible that God has a

reason for it when he makes it necessary for human lives to part for a few years out of a great eternity? The lesson that comes to us as Jesus taught it to his disciples is the endlessness of life and the shortness of separation. 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. For I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. . . . Because I live, ye shall live also.'

"I see the steamer departing and the people returning to their homes. They turn from their sorrow and attend to the business of life. They find pleasure in talking of the absent ones and of meeting them again. Other friends cheer the time of separation. It reminds us of another message that comes from the lips of Jesus Christ to us as we are drawn together here in sorrow:—

"'And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth. . . . For he abideth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless.'

"It is not necessary for me to speak all that might be said of this young life that is with us no longer. But I want to say, with my interest in all young men, that I had the pleasure of knowing this young man. In the words I have frequently heard in the past two days, he was 'a good boy.' But most lives rise higher and sink lower in their inner, unseen selves than we usually know. I have known something of his inner desire to lead a Christian life. I have known something of his struggles in this world where temptation is common; something of his successes and something of his failures. And while I would gladly exert myself to save his life were human effort of any use, I am willing to find comfort—and so may you—in the fact that a soul who struggled manfully is freed from a world of temptation. It is the Christian religion that enables us to see beyond the gates of death. 'Peace I leave with you,' said Jesus, 'my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.'

"This boy was one of our many boys. One whose life is spent among boys has said, 'There is nothing in all the world so interesting as a

boy.' Years ago a great teacher said to the world, 'Come, let us live with our children.' The children of this community are our children. The boys are our boys; the young men are our young men. Our duties toward them are very great and very definite.

"Some kinds of pleasure are more appropriate to the week-day than to the Sabbath. The religious use of Sunday has more real pleasure and benefit than is commonly supposed. But I would rather be this boy who went out in the brightness and beauty of a Sabbath morning to gather flowers and to enjoy a natural sport than be one of our older citizens who have so long neglected the sanctuary that boys are ashamed to have anything to do with the church. I would infinitely prefer to be this boy meeting God than stand before Him in the place of those who put temptation before our boys, selling them 'kindling wood' for the quickening of evil appetite; those who so lower the standard of manhood in this community that the boys have a wrong idea of what it is to be a man!

"Indeed, I can but feel that the passing of this life is a summons to nobler action to every one who believes in Christianity, whether professing

it or not. 'I have chosen you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.' 'Ye are the light of the world; neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel. Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?' Jesus, in his prayer for his disciples, said, 'I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' We do not want our 'good boys' taken from the world. But what are we doing to keep them from evil? and what are we doing to keep evil from them?

"I have a word also for our thoughtful young men—and all young men who are here are thoughtful to-day. A great man of England, when dying, said to another great man who bent over him, 'Lockhart, I may have but a minute to speak to you. Be a good man—be virtuous, be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here.'

"The reason why one should be a good man, be virtuous, be religious, be a Christian, is not because we are going to die to-morrow, though any of us may, but because we hope to live long enough to be of some practical use as God's men

and women in his world; because we expect to live for God and with him—forever! Comfort at death and beyond death follows such a life. Jesus' words to you, my young friends who are still here to fight the battle of life and prove your manhood, are these,—‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. I am come that men might have LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly.’

“ ‘When the fight begins within himself,
A man's worth something
Prolong that battle through his life!
Never leave growing till the life to come! . . .
Why lose this life i' the meantime, since its use
May be to make the next life more intense? . . .

“I say that man was made to grow, not stop.

“And I say, therefore, to live out one's life
In the world here, with the chance
. . . . of learning how set foot
Decidedly on some one path to Heaven
This makes it worth our while to tenderly
Handle a state of things which mend we might,
Mar we may.

“If I stoop
Into a dark, tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendor soon or late
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day.’ ”

It was a weird, vivid scene. I had little in-

terest in the philosophy of Browning till I saw this preacher of an obscure parish, separated from large opportunity of personal culture and the sweets of kindred minds, clasp his New Testament and speak the words of the poet into the eyes and minds of that motley gathering—so that the rudest could not fail to grasp something of their meaning. Stephen Somes' eyes grew deep and thoughtful, and I saw Tom Horton's head flung back and his eyes kindling, as if the gateway into a new, great world had slowly swung wide before him. There was not a sob, and the audience and mourners were too self-forgetful to give evidence of a tear. Only a great mutual sigh came with the silence, as if a bow had been drawn across the tense, many-stringed heart of the people.

CHAPTER XXI

A WRECK AND A RESCUE

" . . . An angry coast and iron waves,
You seemed to hear them climb and fall
And roar rock-thwarted under bellowing caves
Beneath the windy wall."

—*Tennyson.*

A SOUTHEASTERLY storm sprang up in the ensuing night. It swept in toward morning like an assaulting army and set the town on defense. Women at home were stuffing rags in cracks and leaking window-frames, and fishermen were dragging their boats out of reach of the expected high tide, or, on the larger craft, were putting out an extra anchor or mooring line. Scarcely any house could fail to furnish some opening to the searching rain. There were armored figures on the streets in oilskins, rubber coats and mackintoshes; but few umbrellas dared breast the attack. No fish-boats were out. The factories were nearly deserted. Teamsters and laborers rolled about in "squishy" boots, and the children of the "Acre" were out with bilged shoes or bare feet, un-

conscious of any need of change of garb for change of weather.

A boat was coming across the bay. Sandy Watson spied it first from his fish-house and came up and told the crowd at the store, where I waited for the mail.

"'E knowed enough to drop his sprit," said Sandy, "but 'e dodges about like a drunk man."

"Who is it?" cried the chorus.

"Blame me if I know. Looks like Grant Hamilton's boat. Is 'e 'ere?"

"No," cried a boy, "I saw him starting out yesterday, and Jerry Phail asked him to bring a box from"—

"Shut up!" came involuntarily from Phail's lips.

I heard a faint, distressed cry at my side, and turned to catch a glimpse of the awful agony on Mrs. Hamilton's face as she stepped out into the storm. There was a moment's dead silence. Then a corpulent woman with flushed face stepped up and shook her fist before the druggist's eyes.

"Curse you, Jerry Phail!" she cried in a harsh, masculine voice. "It's well the boy knows enough to talk. If there were men in

town who dared to speak up, you'd be watching daylight through the bars!"

There was a shout from the men, and I heard an "Amen!" from Shepard's set teeth and saw the white passion on his face. We rushed through the door and ran and tramped to the brow of the cliff.

"There she is," cried Tom Horton, as a tiny sail rose on the crest of a distant wave, quivered and disappeared. Then we were silent, every man's interest absorbed in the spectacle of a life and a boat fighting a way across the gauntlet of a relentless sea. Only an occasional shout arose when the boat became visible, or a murmur of groans when she swung off from the wind or caught a gust that drove her perilously aslant.

"What's to be done?" I asked Shepard. He shook his head.

"Nothing now. They telephoned the lighthouse up the coast asking if the boat was seen, as it probably was, and the life-boat from the station will be in view soon. But it's a long stretch from the Point, and Hamilton's coming on fast. It all depends on what condition he is in and where he tries to land,—if he doesn't founder."

The storm sighed dismally among the spruces in a momentary lull, when we heard the rage of the pounding breakers far down the beach. Then it flung itself against cliff and forest and the drenched and shivering crowd like an armed battalion, and as suddenly and unexpectedly retreated and seemed to be whispering new strategies in ambush. We heard it marching with a sudden flank movement along the shore, with a dull, hurrying sound as of feet spurred by relentless energy. It flung its bullet-like rain into our faces under caps and sou'westers. It roared like a drum brigade, and its blast almost threw us from our feet.

We crept behind a huge ledge. The sounds took new meaning. It was as if a great pipe-organ were spreading its innumerable tones through all space. We caught the rhythm of its deep, far-away cadence, and the trickling streams that drabbled down the rocks rippled a miserable, sickly, inharmonious accompaniment,—a perfect interpretation of our bodily discomfort. But at times an anthem rose among the trees and echoed along the shore as if the musician had found his paradise and knew nothing of our misery. And as for myself, in some of

the fantastic waltzes, the glowing interludes, the wild beating, the resistless marches, the far-throbbing music of wind and forest and sea, I should have been unconscious of my body were it not for the contrast.

The life-boat was struggling around the Point, defied by tide, wind and sea. But Hamilton had the storm quartering on his bow, just enough to be well out of the wind's eye and the trough of the sea also. Had it not been for the boat's drunken gait that told its owner's condition, we should have looked to see him win. One thing was evident: he could see and steer, recklessly or uncertainly as it might be.

Now he was almost in. The boat's straighter course told of his steadying brain, and, drunk or sober, Hamilton would use his reason as best he could. We sometimes caught a glimpse of his white face and drenched form as he peered under the tossing sail when the boat rose on a wave. Swept out of his course by the tide and almost in the wind's eye he realized, evidently, that he could make neither wharf nor beach, and with slackened sail he was drifting past the cliff. A score of hands were flung to their owners' mouths and voices were shouting,—

"Make the Cove!" "Let her off!" "Take to the Cove!"

"Shut up, you crowd!" growled Captain Sinnett, just appearing, breathless, with a coil of rope about his shoulders. "He can't make out what you say. Now, all together with me and speak it plain,—'Make the Cove.' Now!"——

"MAKE THE COVE! MAKE THE CO-O-OVE!"

A faint shout came back against the wind.

"He hears! Why don't he let her fall off?"

"Too much trough! He's afraid of swamping her. He'll get there now. He can handle her better drunk than half you fellers can sober," growled the captain. "He ain't so very drunk now, either," he added admiringly, as he watched Hamilton half-rising in the boat and evidently considering the smoother sea ahead. Then as he entered the lee of the cliff he swung westerly and made for the Cove. There was a murmur of applause and relaxing smiles.

"Come on, boys, he ain't in yet!" cried Captain Sinnett.

We rushed along the cliff and tore through the little patch of forest, coming out at the Cove just in time to see the boat suddenly stop and swing to leeward.

"He's caught on the old weir stakes," shouted Tom Horton.

"Just what I expected," said the old captain, coolly fastening an end of his rope to a tree; "and not a boat on the beach! He'd drown twice 'fore that life-boat got in. Here, Mike, Tom, Guy, Steve, Hen, Sam—you too, Sandy,—gaffe onto that line and come after me."

Fastening the other end below his shoulders he flung down the coil and strode down the beach. His tall form tramped into the sea and after him, gripping the line, splashed men and youths. A gust of wind tore around the cliff and in a twinkling the boat capsized. I heard a choking shriek behind the crowd and knew the sound. Mrs. Hamilton was leaning against a boulder for support, her rain-garments drenched and dripping, her face as brave as a martyr's, one hand against her lips. Beyond, where the shore road led down through the trees, I saw her carriage.

The men were in line, ankle-deep, knee-deep, waist-deep—the line slipping through their hands as the captain swam the rod's distance from where the Cove's bottom suddenly dropped off to the location of the old weir whose broken stakes, now

hidden by the high tide, held the capsized boat. I saw him with one hand on the boat's stern, disentangling a struggling form from the lines. Even then there might have been two lives lost; but Jake Rook had found a plank in its rocky hiding-place where it had lodged in some high sea, and came down the beach puffing with its weight.

"Here! By mighty! Pass this out to him."

Hands seized it and shot it out along the line of men who stood by the rope. Hamilton was too exhausted to swim, and the captain's efforts had drawn nearly the last of his strength. But they came in, slowly and surely, clinging to the plank, the rope drawn carefully by eager hands till the precious freight could be steadied and guided by the gang in the sea. The crowd closed about them with a shout as they reached the beach. Mrs. Hamilton stepped among them with steady, commanding tones. The rescued man was wrapped hastily in dry shawls that appeared suddenly in her hands, and was thrust into the carriage. Captain Sinnett climbed in, weak and tottering, and the horses' feet clinked and the carriage rattled up the rocky road, thereins in Mrs. Hamilton's hands. I turned to Shepard.

"It's over!" I said with a nervous laugh.

He was calm and serious. "No, it's not over," said he. "There's a life saved, perhaps. But what is Grant Hamilton to be now? Go up, Marshall, it may save them a hunt for a doctor."

I sprang up the bank. Jake Rook's voice roused the self-unconscious crowd.

"By Keesar, wa'n't that a scare! Come up to the house, boys, and git yourselves dry and warm."

CHAPTER XXII

HOW THE LIFE-LINE WAS CAUGHT

"I believe it! 't is thou, God, that givest; 't is I who receive :
In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe.
All 's one gift : thou canst grant it moreover as prompt as my
prayer."

—*Robert Browning.*

THE gilt sign, "Phail's Pharmacy," disappeared from Hamilton's building. The drugs and stock remained in the store, and an advertisement appeared in several prominent New England journals :

"WANTED.—At Echo Bluffs, Maine, competent registered druggist who can serve the moral interests of the community. Store to rent and stock for sale, or will pay salary. Large patronage and more or less public contempt reasonably certain.

"GRANT HAMILTON,
"Echo Bluffs, Maine."

This was Hamilton's first move. It created a sensation and supplied a new topic for common talk, with a variety of comment in homes, factories, and behind screens.

"The devil 's cast out!" I said to Nat Murray.
He shook his head, solemnly, the sagacious

twinkle lurking in his eyes. "It'll be a good while before the swine rush into the sea!"

There were boats about the entrance to the Cove and men were wresting out the remains of the old weir. I surmised that Hamilton's orders lay back of the work.

We were at the "Gospel Harbor" song-service again. Shepard often prefaced the meetings by short practical talks designed to touch the intelligence of the people. He could apply religion to anything from the abuse of the body to the extravagant economy of buying cheap shoes. It may be true that the world's stock of fools is never materially lessened by good advice, but it is morally certain that ignorance may be diminished. There is a distinction between ignorance and folly. According to Shepard's philosophy, ignorance is one of the roots of all folly and evil. When I once questioned it by citing evidence that education only changed the nature of the evil, he shrugged his shoulders.

"I do n't mean to be one-sided, Marshall. Ignorance is n't the tap-root by any means. But there is an ignorance of great moral and spiritual truths—theological truths, too—that is allowed

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to exist in higher education ; and that's as bad as any ignorance. Turn over your Ruskin, old boy ! He says, ' Education does not consist in teaching youth the shapes of letters and the tricks of numbers and then leaving them to turn their arithmetic to roguery and their literature to lust. ' ”

His theme to-night, as usual, was couched in graphic language :—“ What is Manhood For ? ” It was a clear-cut talk, its quiet reasoning somewhat in contrast to the stirring songs, but it simply touched another avenue to minds and souls. At the close he drew a striking picture of the influence and power of a manly life devoted to God and one's fellow creatures—whether the life be as a candle, a torch, or a lighthouse. It was a well-chosen theme for the time. To ordinary observation there had been no extraordinary significance in the recent events. But Joe Arthur's tragic death, Hamilton's rescue, and the closing of Phail's liquor den, had made impressions ; and around some lives had gathered a quiet, resistless tide that was sweeping them towards a new future. The unassuming lives that had long stood at the floodgates of song and prayer and deed and influence and personal friendship were letting it in.

Shepard felt it, and it added a light to his face and a power and conviction to his tones: "Up, boys, up! Men and women, rise above the level, leap past the evil, live higher than your temptations! Lift your lights where others may see them gleam! When we have sung our song let me know how many are willing to be light-bearers."

Nan Rhodes stepped beside the organ as the music began.

"Say, is your lamp burning, my brother?
I pray you look quickly and see;
For if it were burning, then surely
Some beam would fall brightly on me.
There are many and many around you
Who follow wherever you go;
If you thought that they walked in the shadow,
Your lamp would burn brighter, I know."

Shepard lifted his hand; earnest, thoughtful faces were rising in the front. Across the aisle I saw Jennie Kent looking eagerly toward Guy Wilson. He met her glance, and a firm, decided resolve lighted his face. They rose together. Then the tide crept to the rear, and with a thrill I saw Grant Hamilton rise, and behind him Stephen Somes and Tom Horton. At the full flood Shepard bowed in earnest prayer, and when

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seats were resumed Nan's voice rose again with the music of the organ :—

“ Throw out the Life-line to danger-fraught men,
Sinking in anguish where you 've never been:
Winds of temptation and billows of woe
Will soon hurl them out where the dark waters flow.
Throw out the Life-line! Throw out the Life-line!
Some one is drifting away;
Throw out the Life-line! Throw out the Life-line!
Some one is sinking to-day.”

Grant Hamilton arose with a pale, resolute face, and squared his shoulders. “ Friends and townsmen,” he began with painful awkwardness, and looked about as if to accustom himself to the new situation; “ I came down here to-night because I felt it was my duty. This was my factory, and you know its story. It was prosperous once, and when it was new we were proud of it. Now it is wrecked and ruined. But I do n't know but it is doing its best work now.”

He paused to control his emotion.

“ You know my history, too. I thought I could be master of my own ship. I was wrong, and now I'm a wreck. But I don't want to say I am ruined. I hope my best work is before me.

“ When I tried to accommodate Jerry Phail by

a little errand across the bay I got caught on my own weir stakes. I thought when I came across in that storm, half-drunk, and the wind and rain began to beat sense into me, 'Grant Hamilton, it's all up with you; you'll never be a man again.'

"When I hung my boat on the old weir and saw Job Sinnett wading out with his line and a crew behind him I half wished they would let me go. Then I thought of this very song. It sounded just as I heard it here once last summer. And it seemed as if there might really be a life-line for a wrecked man, and I prayed God to help me catch it or let me drown.

"I believe the life-line has saved me. I do n't know how much I can do. I suppose rum may be sold here for years. But I mean to count one. My weir stakes are up, and with God's help I will keep my light burning on the shore and a life-line in my hands."

He sat down and bowed his head, with shaking form. There was a moment's intense silence. A thrill swept over us. Then the singer's voice broke forth with a pathos and a glory like a sunrise of gold and purple breaking over the sea-dashed cliffs of the Eastern Pass:—

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“ If once all the lamps that are lighted
Should steadily burn in a line,
Wide over the land and the ocean,
What a girdle of glory would shine!
How all the dark places would brighten!
How the mists would roll up and away!
How the earth would laugh out in her gladness,
To hail the millennial day! ”

CHAPTER XXIII

TOM HORTON'S DISCOVERY

"Unless above himself he can erect himself how mean a thing is man!"—*S. T. Coleridge.*

NEXT morning I was shuffling off letters in preparation for the anticipated return to the city, my thoughts busy with memories of the summer. Tighten the heartstrings as I might I was conscious of the expansive power of new affections. I had almost avoided Nan of late. I dared not trust myself to think of her longer. My heart was breaking its barriers. Was hers? The question rose in rapid surges in my brain, "Is this all? Is this all?"

There was a knock at the door. "Come!"

It was Tom Horton.

"Ah, Tom, come in. What may I do for you?"

"Oh, nothin'. Thought I'd come in and call. I heard you was goin' off, and"—

"Oh!" I exclaimed, blaming my stupidity. "I'm glad to see you. I thought of you this morning. The fact is, I was at the 'Gospel Har-

bor' last night. So you're taking a new track, eh, Tom?"

"No, sir."

"Why, how is that? Did n't I see you and Stephen Some lining up behind Grant Hamilton?"

"Yes, sir. But we've been waitin'. Steve said he was as good as he would be if he made any pretensions and I did n't dare to make any. Some folks think I'm worse than I am, I guess, or else I am not as good as I mean to be. So Steve and I helped each other along and did n't bother with the rest. Steve did n't want to go to church. I like it, and I kept him goin'. Steve don't care much for a good time. Now I like to go with the boys, and sometimes—when you get started—you do n't know what you're doin' till it's too late. Steve kept me out of scrapes, mostly. We tried to be all right. People do n't know. They think I'm a devil and he's a dunce, I guess." He paused.

"Go on!" Tom could talk without much urging.

"Well, when Joe Arthur was drowned and folks began to talk about what a good boy he was it struck us all in a heap. Joe was a good

fellow; we knew it, you bet. He gave his wages to his folks, and never wasted a cent, and was good to his sister,—you know, the lame one—Dot. But we never thought anybody else noticed it. Doctor, why could n't somebody have told Joe so before he died? 'T would have helped him a lot!"

It was a startling question and met me with considerable force.

Tom went on. "'I wonder if they'd call us good boys if we were drowned,' Steve asked me. 'I reckon not,' I said; 'Joe was different. They never said anything bad about him, anyhow. They call you lazy and I dunno what they say about me—worse 'n that, I reckon. We'd have to soak in the pond a week before they'd change their music.' Then Steve looked up at me as if he had one of his solemn thoughts. 'I wonder what we are!' he said. 'Folks do n't know; and we do n't know.' I tell you it made me feel mighty queer. Steve's always gettin' off some big thoughts that stir you up."

I nodded my interest.

Tom continued: "Well, you know what Mr. Shepard said at the sing last night—about what a man's made for? I never thought about that.

I used to wonder about Steve, but I don't s'pose I ever looked into next week, or next year, to see what was in it for me. Gracious, I feel as if I'd discovered somethin'!" His eyes glowed with a new light.

"An acorn ain't much like an oak, sure, as the minister said. We boys ain't much like him, nor you, nor—Jesus Christ. I guess we're pretty small herrin'.

"I do n't know but what I did more hurt than good keepin' out nights with the boys. I s'pose they knew my folks did n't like it. I wanted 'em to see that I could do it all right. Shucks! I see now. Doing nothin' bad ain't of much account. Now there's John Hunt. He'd like to do somethin'. But he's stuffy and a little bit proud because his folks live in a shanty, and he lets out that he do n't care to be any better than they are. I might have been helpin' him as much as I did Steve, anyway. Then there's lots and lots of the boys just nowhere, and gettin' ready for nothin'. A fellow do n't know what he can do till he tries."

"You've hit it, Tom!" I cried with enthusiasm.

Tom rattled on: "So last night I punched

Steve and whispered, 'Steve, we've got to begin.' He nodded. But there wa'n't nobody near us risin' up, everybody down front, and we did n't dare to pop up above the sitters like targets. Then Grant Hamilton got up in the next seat and we slid up behind. Oh, was n't I scared!" He gasped. "Now, doctor, what am I goin' to do next?"

"Do, my boy?" I cried; "you've done it! You've learned what some people never learn—to get out of the rut! Do the next thing—whatever it is. You'll find it. Keep your eyes open. Use your common sense. Take care what you say. People won't put faith in you right off. I don't know what you may do next. Ask Shepard. You ought to help each other."

"I'm goin' to. I'll ask him,"—he gulped his emotion—"and God. But I thought you might tell me some things. Mr. Shepard said last night that it sometimes takes a long time to make a large man, but a man could be good and do good in a sardine factory as much as anywhere. That's all right. I'm willin' to try. But I do n't believe *I* can ever be much of a man if I stay there. I want to learn somethin'.

It'll take lots to make me what I want to be," he concluded, pathetically.

"Why did you leave school?" I asked.

"Oh, we wanted money, of course, and the rest of the boys went into the shop, so I went. Some of us went to school a few winters; but we forgot all about it the rest of the year. The shop's so hot it cooks a fellow's head. So we gave it up, and we haven't been to school any for two years."

"Will you go again?"

"I can't till winter. At least," he paused,—
"the factory runs till December. I should lose a heap of work."

"Do your people need your wages?"

"Well, I only earn for myself, mostly—for clothes and shoes, and most of what's left goes to them, of course. They'd like for me to go to school, if they thought I really wanted to go."

"Look, Tom," I said, "there are thousands of boys that stand at some time just where you stand. They must take their choice between earning money and going to school. If they go to school the chances are they will earn more money by and by. That is n't a sure thing—it's as uncertain as next year's run of herring. Be-

sides, I do n't want you to go to school to learn how to get rich. But if you want to be a man of any size and ability, and if you have the pluck and steadiness to stick to it, I agree with you that you'd better begin outside of the factory—because you're a boy, and a boy's place is in school, or at least where he is being well taught. You have life before you. You're very good at rushing a hill or shooting rapids, but it isn't easy for you to take a stiff tramp on a long road. It would take ten terms of school to make you steady enough even for factory work. It is irregular, and that is just your nature."

I eyed him sternly. He would not flinch, but waited.

"If you are plucky and steady, no one knows what you may become—how large, or good, or successful, or useful. You've heard Mr. Shepard tell the stories of great lives,—how ambition comes out of poverty, courage out of fighting, experience out of struggle and defeat, ability out of long study and practice. There is n't any other way. The minister keeps up his muscle with the punching-bag. Understand?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"Very well. I get discouraged about men very easily. Some people are too lazy to get out of the rut, no matter how smart they may be; and some are too restless to stick to the road. But I agree that Garfield was right when he said he never passed a boy without feeling like taking off his hat, because he knew not what possibilities might be buttoned under his coat. Tom, if you really want to find out what to do and what you may be, and what a man is good for in a world where most people are living to make money, then here—I take off my imaginary hat! Do you mean it?"

He laughed, but stood erect and spoke with a new thoughtfulness and dignity.

"Yes, sir, I mean just that."

"Good! Now go home and tell your folks about it. Get out your school-books and come in to-morrow evening to tell me where you stood when you left school. Make up your mind if you really want to leave the shop, for a long, hard pull. See if the foreman will accept a week's notice. I'm busy this morning, and going next week. I'll talk more to-morrow and we may settle your plans for your future."

He rose, and lifted his chest with a deep

breath. "I feel as if I'd discovered somethin'!" he exclaimed again.

I laid my hands on his manly shoulders with an impulsive warmth. I, too, was discovering something.

"Tom, my dear boy," I cried, "for one thing, you are discovering yourself!"

CHAPTER XXIV

STEPHEN SOMES

" . . . Who does his best
Bears the stars of his destiny in his own breast."
—*Edwin Markham.*

PAUL SHEPARD had an experience similar to mine that day.

I started for a stroll to his house in the early evening, and met him on the brow of the hill with his budget of outgoing mail. The night was beautiful. I begged his company for an hour's boating. He hesitated with his usual shrinking from so much of personal pleasure, but when I assured him I must have time to talk with him of Tom Horton he yielded.

I took the rowing seat, Shepard the tiller. While the oars dipped into the quiet water, resplendent with the sunset, I detailed the morning's conversation. It aroused his enthusiastic nature.

"There!" he exclaimed, and his clenched hand fell emphatically upon the quarter, "Tom has begun for himself what we could never do. All

the influences and preaching imaginable are only a breath compared with a boy's determination to do something. Now we can make influence count. I know Tom. If he has his eye on a mark he only needs a little prodding. He'll jump. But, do you know, Stephen Somes came to my house about the same hour."

I slackened rowing and listened with interest, the water rippling over the trailing oars.

"They vanished when the meeting closed last night," he said. "This morning I was wondering where I might find them to-day. I stood at my window, watching for fishboats, and saw Stephen coming up the walk, looking about as if he hoped I was out-of-doors. I stepped into the orchard and he entered by the gate. He's not talkative—gets to the point.

"‘I'm going away, Mr. Shepard,' he said.

"‘Away? For what? Where?’ I asked.

"‘I'm going to Elm City to work in a machine-shop. Mother's cousin is there. He asked me to come last winter. Now I think I'll go.’

"‘It's a new plan, is n't it?’ I asked. ‘I'm sorry—heartily sorry. We want you here. I saw you and Tom standing as lighthouses last night, and I know it means something. Of course

I can't make your plans ; but one thing is certain : there is no place in all God's world where clean, manly boys are more needed than where character is lacking.'

" 'Mother and I talked about it last night,' he said, 'and we made up our minds. I ought to be learning a trade. Mother works too hard. When fish are scarce we hardly get through the winter. If I do n't do any better than I'm doing now, Chet and Oscar won't get any school except winters. I'd like to stay here. I may do more good somewhere else. Perhaps I'll get back some day. I can't be a very large man, but I do n't want to be any smaller than I am. I'm afraid I shall be if I stay here now.'

"I hardly knew what to say. So I sat down and began.

" 'First of all,' I said, 'you did a large thing last night when you let the boys see what you mean to do. Will you stick to that purpose?'

" 'Yes, sir,' he replied.

"I knew he would. Slow and sure,—that's a synonym for Stephen Somes.

" 'Very well,' I went on, 'any man who says that and means it is a large man already.'

" 'Yes, sir, I know it counts. But Tom is n't

satisfied. He wants to get higher, and wants me to do what he does; and I'm not like Tom.'

"'You are right,' I said. 'And there's another side to it: Tom is n't like you. Have you thought of that?'

"'Well, not exactly,' he replied. 'Perhaps I do n't know what you mean.'

"I asked him if he expected you and me to be alike. He laughed.

"'Well, no,' he said; 'the doctor is quite chummy, and the boys are getting to like him. But I don't think he's quite cut out for a minister!'

Shepard's eyes twinkled as he repeated it. I laughed till the shore rang and a head bobbed out of a schooner's cabin. He continued:

"'The bee is n't a flower,' I said, 'and the flower is n't a bee. One may be worth less than the other, but it depends on whether it's a bad bee or a bad flower, not on whether it's a flower or a bee. Now it is n't a question of whether it's you or Tom; it is a question of whether you do your best.'

"That seemed to comfort him. But he went on:

"'Don't you think Tom will amount to more than I can?' he asked.

“‘Honestly, I do n’t know,’ I said. ‘Tom is n’t anywhere yet. He’s not what he will be later. Tom’s a colt. He may make a fine record, or a runaway, or settle down to a stage-coach. No one knows. Tom Horton won’t be Tom Horton by and by. He’ll be some one else, larger or smaller, better or worse, but you may be sure when we see the man we sha’n’t know he was the boy. Now you are like this tree,’ I said, turning him to my new plum. ‘That’s a sapling, but it will always be a plum-tree. I bought it for a plum, and I do n’t expect grapes or apples. You are Stephen Somes, and you’ll be Stephen Somes twenty years later, older and larger and better, no doubt. You are honest as was your father. You are as good as your mother could expect you to be in an atmosphere like this. Tom *may* go adrift. I do n’t think so, of course, but I’m more certain just now that *you won’t*. Tom *may* make a great man, steady and sensible and useful. I *know* you will be square, temperate and honest. You may be slow, or you may gain faster than we think; but twenty years hence you will have your father’s honest, plucky, quiet nature and your mother’s eyes and affection. What Tom does he’ll do fast. Naturally the colt may grow

faster than the plum-tree; and he can trot, but the tree will bear plums. God made them both, and made them useful. Harry Watson wants his horse, and I want my orchard. Do you suppose God can be satisfied without both you and Tom?'"

Shepard paused. "Better pull on the oars a little more, Marshall. The tide's setting us on the Point."

I roused myself to the situation and sped the boat towards the sea.

"That was quite a sermon," I said. "I wish Tom had heard it. You rival Nat Murray in illustrations. Taking lessons, eh?"

"Yes!" he responded emphatically. "Nat taught me to use words for people's eyes as well as for their ears. If I'd known of Tom's conversation with you at the same hour I might have spoken differently. But really, it is all true. Tom will be some one else, and great and steady and true, I believe, with his ambition and pluck; and Stephen—I trust him to grow into one of God's noblemen wherever he may be—he will be the boy grown into the man, and carry the same quiet, steadfast, slow, honest nature. He will always be Stephen Somes—God bless him!

There are two kinds of humility: one man believes himself great and agrees to be silent about it; another, on the same plane, may realize the fact that he is only one among a million equals and a thousand superiors."

CHAPTER XXV

"NAN"

" . . . All dark and red,—a tract of sand,
And some one pacing there alone,
Who paced forever in a glimmering land,
Lit by a low, large moon."

—*Tennyson.*

THERE are times when we step out from the scenes and become spectators of our own life's drama. A strange sub-consciousness awakens. Self stands apart from self, a judicial and impartial critic, and watches the stage. The preceding acts, the present scene, the drift of the play, the anticipated future, the relation to the inclusive theater of the world,—all are real and vivid. It may bring an exaltation of feeling, or a quiet solemnity, or grief; in any case it is good for the soul.

It was evening again. I was walking the beach, realizing that summer was past. Something in the night sounds of the sea and the rising moon flinging a mantle of gold across the bay like a beckoning path brought me such a mood. How could it be otherwise? Night and

moonlight are so unlike day and sunlight, idleness and quiet so unlike activity and noise, and the hard red sand of Salter's Beach with its lisp-
ing, lapping waves so unlike gray pavement and the incessant, throbbing waves of humanity. It stole upon me as I strode back and forth, laying its quieting touch upon me and stilling the bodily senses with its anesthesia, while the mind grew more keenly sensitive and reflective.

I could almost catch the hum of the far-off city and see myself, Marshall Dee, linked with the throng and lost in its midst, pushing hither and thither in accustomed scenes and old-time moods. I watched him as I have watched from the hospital tower the quick stride of physicians and nurses across the grounds among the painful or listless slowness of invalids or convalescents, and the streams of humanity pouring past the gate—and all like tiny midgets in the distance below, their tinyness impressing and oppressing me with a sense of their insignificance and transiency. I felt the narrowness of his largest ambitions, the intolerance of his apparent toleration, his growing irritability and moodiness, the gloomy hours of interrupted work, the anticipation of intolerable idleness and rest by the sea.

Then the scenes of the summer flashed like a vitascope. There had been little idleness—little rest in the sense of inactivity; no isolation from life and humanity; and in place of the pains and groans of ailing bodies had come the woes and weaknesses of crippled character and self-abused souls; the tragedy hung about with the same gay curtains of heedlessness and interspersed with comedy and fine heroic drama.

But there was more. There was an undertone of a new music not heard in the old life.

There must have been rest—or its equivalent, recreation—for as I paced the beach in the tonic magnetism of the breathing sea and sky and forest I realized the strength and vigor of limb, the new poise of the mind, the adjustment of the reason. But the rest, the recreation,—what had it been?

I saw Guy Wilson again on the beach with his tempter. The scene flashed so vividly that I caught my breath and stood still. I heard the music again as it came down from the “Gospel Harbor” that night, and the manly, ringing tones of the youth as they met the snaky whispers of the man. I was pressing through factories and mingling with real life in “Heaven” and the

“Acre,” in the highways and by-ways of the town. The variety of human character was leaping the boundaries of my own narrow thought and treading new paths in my nature, bred in the loneliness of conventionality and the throng of the city. Nat Murray’s homely wit was stirring my smiles and loosening the tensity of my brain.

Then I was living Grant Hamilton’s life again, with stir and shudder and thrill, as I stood on the sand, its tragedy and triumph pouring through my mind. I saw the snares gathering about Jennie Kent and rent asunder. I closed my eyes to follow her again to Nan Rhodes’ haven of safety, and heard with a peculiar sense of sweetness the sound of prayer. The touch of Joe Arthur’s naked body was against my hands. I was watching Stephen Somes’ slow, thoughtful life. Tom Horton’s kindling soul was quickening mine and I was glowing with anticipations of his future. Life after life passed before me with its own peculiar impress. And through all and more than all were the voice and eyes,—unobtrusive but very real,—of a sardine girl.

I turned and paced the beach again. Was it nothing but change of sound and scene that had restored vigor and refashioned the mind?

How my life had been sifted, sifted, by a firm, kindly, unyielding, omnipotent Hand! How unlike my own thought of the passion of love was the unquenchable affection that had sprung up for a woman's life that now seemed inseparably a part of mine!

The factory lights streamed down from the wharf. The glare of fire from fresh-flung coal shot up against the sky from the silhouette of the stack. The same lives were there; the same struggles were going on and must go on. But with my new interest and devotion had come a stillness, a calmness, a patience and tolerance and hope, like the quiet of the moonlight that fell on the waves that fawned about the red beach or flung their tiny, restless weakness against the stones and hushed with the shifting tide and dying wind.

"O God," I cried, as I swept the landscapes of the scene and of my life, "is this new birth?"

With the intensity of feeling I sat on the rock and covered my face. But I could not shut from my eyes the beauty of the night scenery, nor the flood of quiet and peace from my life.

The factory lights had vanished, and calls and

laughter floated down from the wharf and street. I heard steps on the pebbles and sand. Nan Rhodes was walking up the beach, alone as usual, catching what I had heard her call “the good-night breath of the sea.” She saw me as I sat in the full moonlight, and came up frankly with extended hand,—the odor of oil about her garments, the uncouth garb mocking her form and face.

“Nan,” I cried, rising impulsively and forgetting my old formality, “you ought not to be here!”

A mischievous flash of the eyes replied.

“Why ‘Nan,’ and why not here?” she queried.

“It’s not the beach I mean; it’s the factory—the town! Who are you? What’s the use of spending your life here?”

“I’m Nan Rhodes, fish-packer in the ‘Resurrection,’ Doctor Dee,” she said mockingly. “Do n’t I pack fish well? Twenty cases to-day!”

“You are more than that,” I said more quietly. “I’m not inquisitive. But you and I have some common interests here, and it has made our acquaintance more than commonplace.

I know your habits, your tastes, your influence,—and your voice. It's a stupid doctor who can see no causes back of indications."

"What has the past to do with the present?" she asked gravely.

"What has it to do with the future? That concerns me!"

"Well—what?"

"You were not made for a sardine packer."

"Oh! Why not?"

"You ought to be above it."

"Ah!" A silence. "Do I know too much? Do I discourage any one?" The humor of the idea brought forth her merry laugh. "Perhaps I sing too well."

"No, but you ought to have a larger world,—a better chance. It would mean privilege and opportunity."

She looked about the sea and back to the factory. Her eyes fell upon her working-garb and she lifted her lunch-box with a slight, expressive gesture as she surveyed me,—well-clad, in my cool summer attire.

"What is privilege? What is opportunity?"

When she asked the questions I knew what they meant. They pierced the logic rising in my

mind and my argument fell, shattered and bottomless.

“Have n’t you learned, this summer, doctor?”

I was silent. Her eyes began to glow with a rising passion.

“Do you think when a better place is found I can pack my affections and take them where people will admire me? Do you think I could go out into the world and sing words, mere words, with no soul or meaning in them, as is bound to be the case if I crush the feelings of my heart?”

A month sooner I would not have yielded. But the impressions of the night had gathered the summer’s experiences together, and I knew I was not the same. I sat down with a sense of weakness.

“I am willing to learn, my friend,” I said, with an effort to assume my old nonchalance.

“You are sure you are my friend?” she asked. The word seemed to touch her.

“You know, do you not?”

“I have reason to think so,” she replied, and her shaken voice was like broken music.

Then she sat and told me the story of her life.

CHAPTER XXVI

OVER THE SEA

"A poor man served by thee will make thee rich;
A sick man served by thee will make thee strong;
Thou shalt thyself be served by every sense
Of service which thou renderest,"

—*E. B. Browning.*

"Do you know of the mines at Winter Hill in Nova Scotia? My home was there. Father was a physician. There were also mother and my brother Carl and grandmother,—father's mother, who was born in Germany. The members of her family were musical, and years ago, at her old German home, she taught singing. We were all fond of music. Sunday afternoons, and many other times, we spent in song.

"As grandmother grew old she missed the German friends who had lived and died near us at Winter Hill. She began to grow lonely. She longed for German songs and German voices. Sometimes she said if she could go back to the fatherland she could sing again.

"The mines did not always prosper, and there

was a great deal of sickness in the miners' families. Father was not wealthy. He was so kind-hearted he would not press the miners for money. But at home he used to speak of his own poverty, and it troubled me when I was a child. He had fine tastes; so had mother. He wanted what we couldn't have, and used to speak of what he might do for my voice if he had money. But almost as often he would speak in the same way of what he might do for some neighbor.

"When the mines closed many of the people moved away. Some of them scattered about the States. Some came to the sardine-shops. I was sixteen. Father announced one day that grandmother should go to Germany; that we would all go. It should be our one great vacation, he said. We would visit those who had often urged him to come, and the old scenes of grandmother's stories, and she should hear her heart's content of German song.

"Oh, it was delightful! We found so many friends! They had known grandmother and loved her,—many people younger than she, whom she taught to sing before she married and went to America with grandfather. None of them were people of wealth. But they were people

with royal, loyal hearts, and father declared he had half a mind to settle in Germany. You should have seen grandmother close her eyes and smile when she listened to old German songs. There were six months of those days."

Nan's face grew quiet and thoughtful with an expression of solemnity more akin to tranquil joy than sorrow.

"One Sunday night while we were at service at the old Lutheran Church and the chorus was singing 'Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott,' grandmother passed away. It was good of God to take her from song to song!

"Then Carl was hurt. We took him to the hospital in the city. It was not far away and some of us visited him daily. One day I went alone. I had been singing to him and when I came away I strayed into the emergency ward. There was a man, an American, I thought, lying in one of the beds with a hot, flushed face and restless, lonely eyes. I forgot where I was or what I was doing, I wanted so much to touch him! And when I put my hand on his face and tried to brush out the wrinkles as I used to from grandmother's forehead, he burst into tears.

"He reached for my hand and held it, as if he

was afraid I would leave him. He was too sick to talk. After a time he dropped my hand, asked me to come again, and closed his eyes as if he wanted to rest. So I went away.

"After that when I visited Carl I used to go and stand by this man's bed and talk with him and smooth his hair and forehead. Father watched me from the door when he was with me, but he was thinking of grandmother's death and of Carl, and said the man needed me, not him. And the man asked so many questions! It was as if he must have something to think about besides himself.

"I'm afraid I told him all the family secrets," she laughed. "I told him what a lot of good father had done at Winter Hill, and how gloomy he felt sometimes because he had not money enough to do more for his family and for others, and how I wanted to learn to make money to do good. When I told him that, he closed his eyes with a peculiar 'Uh!'"

Nan was watching me closely.

"That was Tom Morgan!" I cried.

"Yes! He told me his name. Then one day when he was quite strong he said:

"'Little girl, you and your father are right,

and wrong, too. The world will be better for all you can do. But when you try to get much money, even to do good, you will be feeling for something hard, and those little fingers will lose their soft touch. Your father's patients love him because he is poor, like themselves, and does all he can. If you try to make money do the work you can do, it will never be done. And you cannot do with money what you can do with yourself. Go and see Carl, and send your father to me.'

"Father and Doctor Morgan—at that time I did not know he was a doctor—had a long talk. I have never learned what was said. But when I came back from Carl's room father was thanking him, and telling him to do as he wished; and both looked much pleased. Father went out and Doctor Morgan took my hand.

"'I am going away to-morrow, Nan,' he said. 'I'm a pretty sound man now, and it's time to travel. It's been good for me to be here. Now, look! I want you to give people what money cannot buy, as you did to me. You are going to Herr Schönberg for your voice. I will help you do for others what I cannot do.'

"He explained how he had arranged for father

to stay for hospital work and study. It was one of father's old dreams! He should realize and enjoy it, and when he wished to go back to Nova Scotia or elsewhere to practice, his life would count more in real help to other lives.

"‘Uh!’ he said; ‘money can’t do it; he can!’

"There is not much more. He asked me when I thought of him, sometimes, to pray, and not to think of his money but of him and of the good my voice was to do. When I asked him *how* and *where* he looked at me with his odd little eyes and shook his head. ‘Somehow, somewhere, sometime,’ he said; ‘do n’t ask me! You’ll find the place. Did n’t you find my bedside?’

"Those were beautiful years! Father grew younger with his study and hospital work. Mother was always happy and Carl enjoyed the boys and the German school. We missed grandmother, but mother thought so much about her and we talked so much about music and the songs grandmother liked that mother, born in Dundee, grew like her! I wonder if there is any difference between a warm Scotch heart and a warm German heart?

"I sometimes wondered if Doctor Morgan did not tell father more about himself. But there

were only two things that reminded us of him : Herr Schönberg always passed me my music charges in a written receipt ; and the overflow work promised father at his room in the hospital never failed.

“ Doctor Morgan—you knew him, Doctor Dee ! How strange ! ”

She was lingering dreamily over the story, as if the old scenes were real, vivified by the opportunity to tell the tale. She passed her hand over her forehead and gazed out over the sea, where the fishboats were gently rocking on the long, smooth swell, the reflection of the masts broken and quivering like the brighter reflection of the moon. The hand hid her face from me and her voice deepened.

“ Then—father died. That is all. Carl and mother are at St. Botolph’s. I am here.”

“ But I was told that your parents live in Annapolis Valley.”

“ It is not so,” she said. “ It is my cousin’s family. I visit them. It is n’t worth while to talk much about one’s self. Let people think what they choose so long as we do right.

“ I am remembering Doctor Morgan’s wish. It seemed odd to prepare for something that had

no name. But after father died and our grief was hard, I saw how common it was, and learned that sorrow is not always a good reason for being sad. I was born happy. I did not want to become sad and selfish without knowing it."

We sat in the beautiful stillnesses of thought and of night and watched the tide climbing slowly over the kelp-strewn rocks, until the floods of sea and moonlight seemed meeting and blending in a full tide of companionship; and my own thought was drifting out so fast along its new, strange channels that there was no desire for speech.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE SPOKEN AND THE UNSPOKEN

“Close not thy hand upon the innocent joy
That trusts itself within thy reach.
Love thou the rose, yet leave it on its stem.

. . . Leave

To Love his long auroras, slowly seen.
Be ready to release as to receive.
Deem those the nearest soul to soul between
Whose lips yet lingers reverence on a sigh.”

—*Owen Meredith.*

“How came you to be here,” I asked at length,
“and why?”

“Oh, just to try! I was visiting some of our old friends at Winter Hill who worked in these factories, but moved back after the mines reopened. They told me about the factory life and the people and all such things as you’ve seen this summer. I think God led me here; at least I try to do what he needs done. Is there any place where there is a finer chance to make some people happier and better? And these great hills and this beautiful bay and the woods and the cliff walk speak to me so much of God that he seems very near and I can never be really lonely.

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"But I have longed for a friend; some one who could understand—some one for *me*. It has been an unspoken longing. I wonder if all do not have it. If I talked to others as I do to you they would look at me curiously, as if I was simply odd. I found it so when I visited Winter Hill. I dare not try it here. To do what I want, it seems, I must not show my own needs. Are courage and devotion and a mission that is real to one always to be looked upon as oddness? I chose to be silent about myself and let Nan Rhodes' life speak for itself at the packing-table and her voice do what it could where it was needed. A score of girls tell their heartaches to me. But until these days I have felt there was no one to feel mine. I can talk with you as to a friend who listens without strange, distant looks—not even such as I saw in your face when I first knew you. We have come to understand each other. I wish you could know what it means to me."

She quivered with the emotion of a soul whose hunger had found food.

"But I am not clear that a larger world does not need you," I said, with grave sympathy.

"If that is true I shall know in time. I can-

not see it now. The world is crowded with teachers and preachers, I know,—musicians and artists and writers. They are waiting or working for a place, or else are underpaid or overworked. It's strange, but they fit themselves to make lives better and they do ; but it's so much all one way, —so much by machinery. We make cans by machinery ; but do n't you see we must cut and flake and pack and seal sardines and mend leaks, all by hand ? We can't pack fish without getting fish-scales and oil on our clothes. It's dirty work. People say they won't eat sardines after seeing them canned. But when sardines are canned rightly they are clean and good. The more we put our hands to them the better they are.

“Do n't you see what I mean ? There must be some fine, clean lives that will live in the world just as it is, and know all about it and handle things that are soiled and make them clean. I think God wants a clean life, and a good voice, and a taste for good books, and all the culture one can get, put right into a factory town for making better lives,—just as Kenney wants boys and girls from the best families because they clean fish better and have clean hands to pack. They make others want to do

better, too. Isn't it the same in making up lives? Does n't the world need fine people to touch what is rough and dirty?"

"But it's slow work. Are you sure you are really succeeding, enough to pay for the sacrifice?" I asked doubtfully.

"Yes, indeed! When I get discouraged I think of Jesus Christ. He seemed to fail; but he thought his work was worth while—he knew it was. He did n't try to do what he could not, but did what he could, even some things which it seemed could n't be done. It was his duty to try; and his work grew and grew, and it is growing now. He began with the smallest thing when he said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me.' These people are children."

"As a doctor I like to attend a child," I said, "but I can't bear childishness in an adult!"

"Are n't we all children? If you can please a child you can please an older person. If you can help a child and change his mind and his way of doing things you can influence a man or a woman. If you can't get a child to love you, can you reach any one?"

"I understand you—my friend!" she went on, impulsively. "You have a strong will. I knew

it when I first saw you on the beach, last Fourth, when you came with Mr. Shepard and looked at me as if to ask why I was with such company as Guy Wilson. You show it, too, in all you have done for the boys. You want to make them do differently at once. They prefer to cut their fingers a few times and learn slowly. You have your idea of what is good for people, and you don't think much of them unless they do as you say. But it's like this: children do n't like to be taken and hedged up with flowers when other children are playing on the beach. If you leave the gate open and take care how you ask them in they are more likely to come. And they'll come much sooner if they know you and like you,—and will be more likely to stay. Children are not the only ones who do n't know a whim from a reason. We can do most for those we love, can't we? How can they love us unless we get very near them?"

She was pleading with me now, her soul with mine, and there was the passion of one who felt she must win, not for the sake of selfish victory in argument, but in unselfish love.

"I'm not bitter to-night, Nan," I said. "I

am finding what friendship means. But love—how can love live without either perfection or reasonless passion? Once I thought all affection was stamped out of my life. Now I am wondering if what is growing in me is to be real and lasting, or is to be crushed out and die in the city, in winter. O Nan, do you know how much you hold in the balance?"

Her finger-tips rose to her brow in painful perplexity. She sighed, as if the weight of two futures lay upon her responsibility.

"You are asking a sardine girl to do too much for you, Doctor Dee," she said with gentle dignity. "You are only getting ready for your real life. Have you tried to forget yourself and what you want people to be and to do? Can't you do this, and then help them to be what they can be?—not just what you are or what you think they ought to be. Mr. Shepard says we make our own atmosphere. I read this somewhere: 'There's a great difference between a man's wanting a woman to love him and loving her.' We can't say that love is simply perfect friendship. It is something more than that. But it must have perfect friendship to be my ideal. You might make a good lover or a good friend;

but do you think you would be both in—a home ? ”

I was silent, stunned by the revelation.

“Love and friendship—friendship, love,” she was saying to herself in an awed tone, “what wonderful things they are! They are never born together. If one leads to the other and neither fails what a heaven it must be ! ”

A fragment of dusk-tinged cloud was drifting across the moon and a new, quiet harmony of color fell upon the sea and landscape. I caught the glow of her self-forgetful face. Not in utter selfishness but with an absorbed interest in her, blending with the hunger of my own heart, I said:—

“You know one love, certainly,—you call it friendship. Have you ever known the other? You told me your story; you said nothing of that.”

The blood rushed to her self-conscious features. Her lips trembled. “Have you?”

“I? I have never—had time—till now.”

“Ah!” A pause. “You are going back to your busy city life. Even if you began with a lover’s love would you ever find time to reach a higher love?”

We sat there, a full five minutes, I think, and neither dared speak. It might be said neither cared to speak. It is sweet to stand and gaze into the gardens of each other's future, knowing there are barriers between; to stand and look with daring disregard of the barriers and roam together in fancy; to dream the high tide of joy that would fill the heart if the barriers might be thrust away. It tries and refines one's manhood to realize with mighty self-control that the time is not ripe for a spoken word,—it chastens the heart to remember that it might be spoken in vain.

She had dropped her cheek to the hand nearest me, hiding her face. She rose suddenly and clasped the hand I stretched forth to stay her.

"Good-night," she said, brokenly.

"But to-morrow is my last day!" I cried.

"Yes," she said, with an effort at self-control.

A wildly jealous suspicion flashed to my mind, but I trod it relentlessly into the earth and waited until I could speak reverently.

"Have n't you anything to tell me to-night, my—friend? Is Guy?"——

She looked up quickly. "Guy Wilson? Do n't you know? Haven't you seen Guy and Jennie?"——

"No, I've seen them together only twice since Nat Murray pitched Smut White into the sea. What is it?"

"This," she said softly, "and only to you, because we are their friends. A good girl will have a home by and by, a better home than it might have been; and Guy is finding out what love really means. They are saving each other."

"Is that all? Nothing more—for me?"

She hesitated. "We might see the sunset again from the cliff walk—I—suppose."

"To-morrow—Sunday evening?"

"Yes. Before service."

I lifted the hand I held and pressed it between my palms. She drew it back with a hasty "Good-night" and slipped away.

A half-hour later I had staggered over the red rocks and through the breathing pines above the shore with a brow as hot as John Alden's. I passed Shepard's house up the hill and saw him sitting in the quiet coolness of his orchard, seeking refreshment from a late evening's work. I strode in, trying to slacken my gait to an indifferent saunter.

"Hello!" I responded to his surprised greet-

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ing. There were moments of silence, and I feigned a yawn, as if groping for a topic.

“Paul, is Nan Rhodes in love with any one?”

His keen eyes searched my face as if the moonlight revealed my haggard thoughts.

“Bless you, Marshall,” he said simply, “you know as much about it as I.”

CHAPTER XXVIII

SUNSET

"If we would build on a sure foundation of friendship we must love our friends for their sake, not our own."

—*Charlotte Brontë.*

"Friendship is a wide portal and sometimes admits love."

—*Anna Katharine Green.*

OF course it was made up of clouds and colors and sky, as sunsets are,—golden-red and pink and the faintest of pale greens with touches of pure silver and gold; and it was no more beautiful than thousands of sunsets which the Master of colors has flung upon his canvas to be washed away by the floods of night.

But sunsets are never the same. Their meaning is not the same. It is as if a musician, by the same huge instrument, plays on and on through each twilight hour, in changing keys with ever varying expression, and creates within us the moods of his own fancy.

This sunset, as I saw it from the cliff, laid its long bands of silver, gold and pink, tier upon tier against the western sky, floating above the

deep, far-distant green. Higher still were tossed darker clouds, of the sort that remind us of coming night. In the south was flung the boldest expression of massive clouds saturated with liquid dyes, in broken fragments against a far-away blue. And from south to east stretched a long band of loose lamb's fleece, tossed fantastically and dyed with purest crimson.

Where trees loomed against the west they seemed a part of the great painting, and where I caught glimpses of the water it seemed a part of the eastern sky. There was a quiet chanting in the trees as the westerly breeze drew down to the shore. Nan Rhodes was coming along the cliff in quiet, attractive dress, the glow of the sunset reflected about her, a part of the Sabbath sunset scene.

We knew the hour was freighted with great meaning. I caught the light of her eyes. They fell as we met. All my planned fortitude was broken. I would have thrown open my thoughts like a boyish lover.

"Nan!"—— I was quivering.

She laid her hand on my arm with a quiet restraint, looked into my eyes with compassionate response, and smiled.

"Wait,—please! Let me say it for you.

"We think of each other as we did not expect when we met. You are not the man you were when you came, Doctor Dee! You came here tired, disgusted and longing. If it had n't been for those who helped you see the inside of things and for God's own fingers you might have gone back in better health but not to keep so. You said you came from a hollow world. It was hollow because you were hollow, though you hardly realize it now. When you go back you will find it a different world because you are a different man. Selfish ambitions wear men out. You found something better when you forgot yourself in doing good among the sardiners. It satisfied your own longings. And you want to tell me to-day what you need not say. I know. You have found a new longing that you think I can fill."

Her brave eyes quivered and fell in a moment's silence.

"I have wanted a friend stronger than I, some one superior, who could understand me, my purpose, my own—hunger. I have wondered where Doctor Morgan might be, and if I might not find him some day. I would tell him



NAN RHODES WAS COMING ALONG THE CLIFF.

I was using his voice, and that would please him, I know, and help me. But my longing helped me to understand you, and so I found a friend. It seems I have found more.

“Wait! You are my friend now, Doctor Dee. But you are only growing! I don’t want you to lose the good of this summer. I saw when I first knew you that you had a hard hill to climb; and you are only halfway up!

“If you are to be more than a friend and a lover it will be well to know what love is. We may be alike in some things,—but we are not the same. I am a sardine-factory girl; you are a physician in the midst of a great city’s wealth. You are a man with your weaknesses, and I am a woman with mine. Love has much to learn, and sometimes much to endure as well as much to share.

“But we mean something more than the world means when we call each other what Jesus called his disciples,—‘friends.’ Thank God he has permitted us to meet and our souls to walk together! You will think no less of me when I say we are able at this moment to sit at the same altar with a new understanding of what it is to say, ‘I believe in the communion of

saints.' You know what I mean. You pray now. You've no need to say so. I know. God made his sons and daughters to pray. His Fatherhood wouldn't seem real without prayer.

"You told me once, and you said it bitterly, that it takes a doctor to know what people are. You were wrong. Only friends know. Some people do not understand themselves, and what they think are faults in others are only their own twisted shadows. If they try to be friends they may find that others are better than they knew.

"You are going back to the city. Do you think you will remember the summer? You have thought love and friendship depend upon two. *Will you learn to live as if it depended upon one?* You can learn it; some never do. In a busy life nothing will kill friendship so quickly as to be too busy to love. Love is even more sensitive than friendship. You feel that already for yourself. Will you remember it by and by for another?

"When you have learned your lesson well, some one will make your home. I trust you. If you learn it, I shall know. If you do not"—

Fearful of reply, she laid her warm hand across my lips while she struggled for voice.

"If not, God has given us the privilege of parting as he did the privilege of meeting. Does n't it mean something that this summer's friendship is always to stand, and nothing to mar it? How much it may mean, only God knows. For myself, I can do his work better because I know there is some one out in the world who has appreciated and understood. For you,—the Wellington went out last night. She is far at sea to-day, because of the lighthouse at the Narrows. But she could not take the lighthouse with her. She does not need it.

"Do n't speak! Do n't,—do n't! I can't bear it now."

I could only grasp, with all the force I dared, the hand she placed in mine.

"O Nan, Nan!"

She laid her other hand upon my arm. I felt its caress.

"Good-bye."

I turned and stumbled blindly along the path we had walked so many times together. In the darkness of sudden tears the beauty of the land-

scape had vanished, and I was struggling in a tempest of loneliness along a desert of grief.

Can words tell how the heart feels in such an experience?

We begin toying with a pebble picked up on the beach of life, tossing it from hand to hand to admire its hues, laying it carelessly on the rocks while we turn to touch some fragment that glitters. By and by, when we have sat down and turned it over in our fingers with more careful eye we catch the sunset rays upon it and discover the gem. But it slips from our unworthy fingers. It is hidden again among the pebbles of the great shore.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE AFTERGLOW

"A friend makes one outdo himself."—*Emerson.*

"The solitude which is really injurious is the severance from all who are capable of understanding us."—*P. G. Hamerton.*

"Believe me better than my best,
And stronger than my faith can hold,
Until your royal faith transmutes
My silver into gold."

—*Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.*

IN the occasional leisure of my office I have sketched these scenes and secrets of last summer with a heart that finds both pain and pleasure in its confessions. To-night the December snow, whirled by the wind, dances about the windows, its dainty flakes covering the city dust on the grimy stone window-sill and transforming it, as a pure life may lay itself upon a soiled humanity and impart its own spotlessness.

Doctor Stahl is on the night rounds, in the storm, and, if telephone and bell permit, the evening is mine. The last office patient has passed out.

In the beating of the storm I stare at my

anthracite coals and picture again the Echo Bluffs sunset. The afterglow remains. It floats above the sea and by its light I trace the summer scenes.

When the winding paths of the summer had been trod they brought me again to the wharf, the steamer, the return voyage to duty, task, ambition. Yet the city is not the same. I cannot make it nor myself the same—thank God!

The old feeling of resentment, so constant, so harassing, is strangely absent. Two things are bringing to me the buoyancy of youth and the delight of manhood: the discovery of a widening mission of friendship in the circle of my acquaintance and ministrations; and the sustaining power of that friendship by the sea, that does not seem a thing of the past but abides and glows more intensely as other friendships multiply beyond my anticipation.

I am moving on my old rounds, in hospital and in homes. I am beginning to take satisfaction in remedying the ills of patients by a friendship that touches the soul, teaches the sense, and keeps the body well. Heartsickness, disappointment and selfishness make more ills than are known to any but the physician. These

revelations used to embitter me. They strengthened my contempt for the weaknesses of human ambition and affection—when I did not realize the narrowness of my own! At last I have found not simply a profession but a mission. It is not a paradise, nor an unvarying success; but there are finer lights to contrast with its shadows; and the mission is the mission of personality to individuality, my self to another's life, to-day, now, and here. The experiences by which I found it, and the factors that refashioned my thinking and my doing may seem commonplace, the events trivial, the story of Echo Bluffs an idle tale to some. To others it may bring light. Is anything trivial or commonplace that gives new life to a soul or makes a creature into a man? A girl's fingers on old Tom Morgan's face in a German hospital! The same Nan Rhodes, her warm life beating against mine! Yes, Jesus eating with the publican who climbed the sycamore tree to see him pass, and taking that bumptious egotist, Simon, along with him for three years, till he made him a Peter. Anything is of importance that makes a life forget what it is and see what it may be by looking a friend in the face. It's a sort of welcome, I

think, into a world where souls really live. It may make for others what it made for me—a yearning for God, the great Companion.

How little was done last summer ! When the sardine season opens again how much the same the old town will be !

Yet I think of Tom Horton forging ahead in his larger opportunity of student life in my native town and of Stephen Somes making his way to manhood in paths of his own resolute choice and steady plodding. I remember John Hunt in his peculiar isolation at home, hewing his way as with a rail-splitter's axe, with the force of which he is capable, and I wonder if Echo Bluffs will not number him among her honored citizens. I know in his own sphere of influence, which must steadily increase, Grant Hamilton is fighting that despicable liquor traffic in a warfare in which the righteous forces of Maine are bound to win. As I paint my pictures in the glowing fire the thoughts rush over me till I have lived again the struggles and triumphs of the lives I know, and the story of Echo Bluffs seems freighted with intense meaning.

Now it seems as if Paul Shepard sits in my

visitor's chair, and his cheery face leans over my desk where his letter lies. I fall to dreaming over Guy and Jennie Wilson and picture their simple home life where they have nested happily among old scenes. A great emotion surges and is breaking; for every face and scene vanishes, and in their place stands, clear and real—Nan Rhodes; now with the odor of oil in the atmosphere of the factory, her fingers flying as she packs her case of sardines and hums her quiet melody; now with the scent of that white rose which, at the seaside, fell from the aureole of her hair, and in my twilight solitude opened to my thoughts the portal and pathway to her inner life; now with her transfigured face and form, singing to open hearts and eager faces at the "Gospel Harbor." She is moving again amidst sorrow, need and temptation, with that peculiar cheeriness that changed all surroundings and made it possible to forget them all; then we are back again to sunset scenes and her tones are falling about me as I heard them when we walked and talked together, and they gave what her life has given—a new charm and meaning to the words to which she may yet give fuller interpretation—"Friendship"—"Love."

That invisible companionship, dwelling in the sanctity of memory and association, is no less real. It spurs me on to be and to do what is demanded by the outer world and the inner ideal. And to what future?

Sometimes I think of the summer as a path of light over which I passed to the unexpected present, and fear that its scenes will be trodden again only in memory. Sometimes I dare hope that the screen has fallen abruptly on an unfinished act, and linger over the question, "Will the curtain rise again?"

Then my autumn dream comes back as I saw it one night after my return, when in the renewed activities my heart hunger was urging me on to a more patient and tender ministry to human life than I had known, and my life was growing stronger, more quiet and brave. A day of busy service had brought a night of reaction and fatigue; and with the night came God's ministry of sleep, and my dream.

It was one of those glowing moonlight nights at Echo Bluffs, when the world seemed to breathe and the tall pines on the cliff, against the sky, were like spirits that had crept up from the sea to

witness the scenes of the town in silent solemnity. Dateless and timeless, like all dreams, it seemed I was standing by the door that opened to the veranda of the old Sinnett mansion, looking through the screen, down past the town and out over the sea. I swung open the door and stepped to the veranda. My heart leaped with recognition as I saw a familiar form leaning upon the farthest rail. I stepped to her side, quickly. There was an instinctive feeling that a question, long lying in the heart, must be asked, whose answer would be final, even restful, whatever the reply.

“Nan!”

I felt the silent figure's recognition.

“Nan, I need you. Will you go?”

There was the slightest motion of assent—the modest yielding of a heart to its welcome future. The hope within me rose to a sense of completeness. This was the tide at the full sea, bearing us to where there should be no ebbing.

That marvel of moonlight! It stretched across the pulsating sea and strewed the scene with jewels. It fell about her and decked her with such robes as I had often wished to see her wear. Her features, outlined against the

scenery beyond, as she turned to meet my eager eyes, linger with me, clear as my summer memories.

Let me call it dream and prophecy.

“Love is the emblem of eternity. It confounds all notion of time, effaces all memory of a beginning, all fear of an end.”





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